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June 1975 50p

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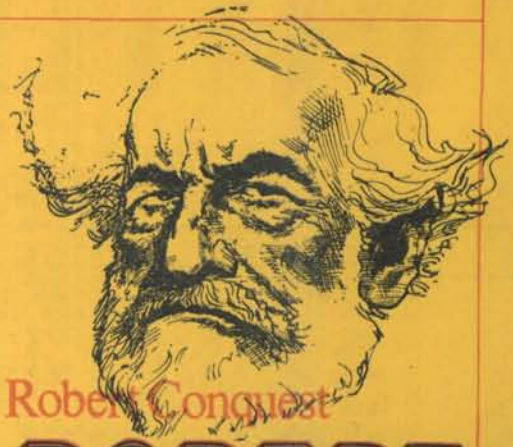

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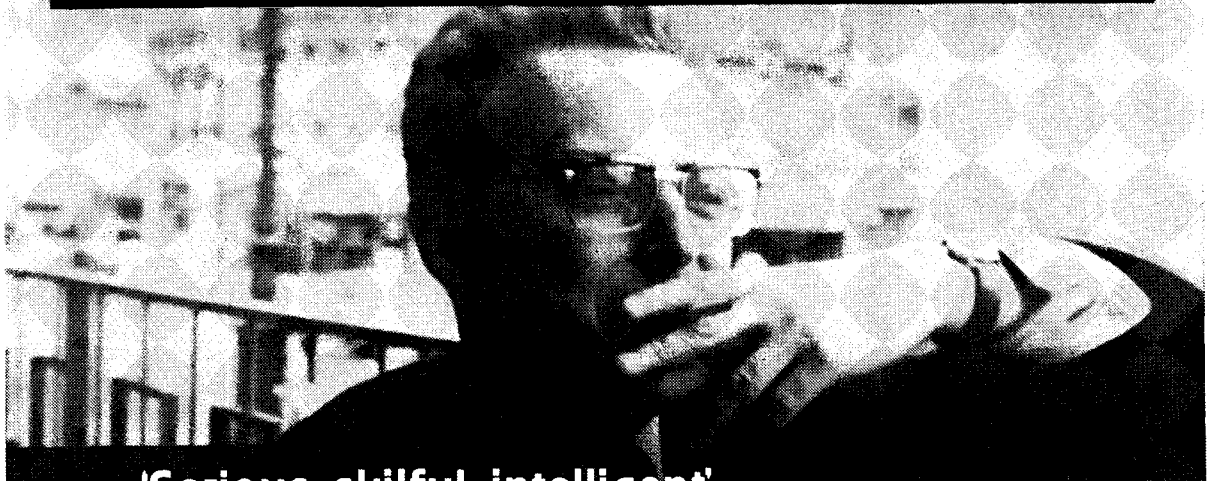

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Cornell University Press

Thomas Mann
1875 – 1955

100th Anniversary of Mann's Birth

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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THOMAS MANN AND ERICH KAHLER

Translated from the German by Richard and Clara Winston

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Mann himself characterized these letters as "fragments of two autobiographies communicatively intertwined." More than that, they are documents of two extraordinary minds striving to define a new humanism.

The correspondence was edited and annotated by Kerényi for the German edition. For the English edition Professor Gelley provides a preface that places the correspondence in biographical and historical context, and he supplements the original notes with additional information on matters discussed in the letters and with updated bibliographical references.

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Bessie Head

Life

IN 1963, when the borders were first set up between Botswana and South Africa, pending Botswana's independence in 1966, all Botswana-born citizens had to return home. Everything had been mingled up in the old colonial days and the traffic of people to and fro between the two countries had been a steady flow for years and years. More often, especially with mining migratory labour, their period of settlement was brief, but many people had settled there in permanent employment. It was these settlers who were disrupted and returned to village life in a mainly rural country. On their return they brought with them bits and pieces of a foreign culture and city habits that they had absorbed. Village people reacted in their own way; what they liked, and was beneficial to them, they absorbed—for instance, the faith-healing cult churches instantly took hold like wildfire—what was harmful to them, they rejected. The murder of Life had this complicated undertone of rejection.

Life had left the village as a little girl of ten years with her parents for Johannesburg. They had died in the meanwhile and on Life's return, seventeen years later, she found, as was village custom, that she still had a home in the village. On mentioning that her name was Life Morapedi, villagers immediately and obligingly took her to the Morapedi yard in the central part of the village. The family yard had remained intact, just as they had left it, except that it looked pathetic in its desolation. The thatch of the mud huts had patches of soil over them where the ants had made their nests; the wooden poles that supported the rafters of the huts had tilted to an angle as their base had been eaten through by the ants. The rubber hedge had grown to a disproportionate size and enclosed the yard in a gloom of shadows that kept out the sunlight. Weeds and grass of many seasonal rains entangled themselves in the yard.

Life's future neighbours, a group of women, continued to stand near her.

"We can help you to put your yard in order," they said kindly. "We are very happy that a child of ours has returned home."

They were impressed with the smartness of this city girl. They generally wore old clothes and kept their very best things for special occasions like weddings and even then those best things might just be ordinary cotton prints. The girl wore an expensive cream costume of linen material, tailored to fit her tall, full figure. She had a bright, vivacious, friendly manner and laughed freely and loudly. Her speech was rapid and a little hysterical but that was in keeping with her whole personality.

"She is going to bring us a little light," the women said among themselves, as they went off to fetch their work tools. They were always looking "for the light" and by that they meant that they were ever alert to receive new ideas that would freshen up the ordinariness and everydayness of village life.

A woman who lived near the Morapedi yard had offered Life hospitality until her own yard was set in order. She picked up the shining new suitcases and preceded Life to her own home, where Life was immediately surrounded with all kinds of endearing attentions—a low stool was placed in a shady place for her to sit on; a little girl came shyly forward with a bowl of water for her to wash her hands and, following on this, a tray with a bowl of meat and porridge was set before her, so that she could revive herself

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after her long journey home. The other women briskly entered her yard with hoes to scratch out the weeds and grass, baskets of earth and buckets of water to re-smear the mud walls and they had found two idle men to rectify the precarious tilt of the wooden poles of the mud hut. These were the sorts of gestures people always offered but they were pleased to note that the newcomer seemed to have an endless stream of money which she flung around generously. The work party in her yard would suggest that the meat of a goat, slowly simmering in a great iron pot, helped the work to move with a swing and Life would immediately produce the money to purchase the goat and also tea, milk, sugar, pots of porridge or anything the workers expressed a preference for, so that those two weeks of making Life's yard beautiful for her seemed like one long wedding feast; people only ate that much at weddings.

"How is it you have so much money, our child?" one of the women at last asked, curiously.

"Money flows like water in Johannesburg," Life replied, with her gay and hysterical laugh. "You just have to know how to get it."

The women received this with caution. They discussed among themselves that their child could not have lived a very good life in Johannesburg. Thrift and honesty were the dominant themes of village life and everyone knew that one could not be honest and rich at the same time; they counted every penny and knew how they had acquired it—with hard work. They never imagined money as a bottomless pit without end; it always had an end and was hard to come by in this dry, semi-desert land. They predicted that she would soon settle down, that intelligent girls got jobs in the post office sooner or later.

LIFE HAD HAD THE SORT of varied career a city like Johannesburg offered a lot of black women. She had been a singer, beauty queen, advertising model and prostitute. None of these careers was available in the village—for the illiterate women there was farming and housework; for the literate, teaching, nursing and clerical work. The first wave of women Life attracted to herself were the farmers and housewives. They were the intensely conservative hard-core centre of village life. It did not take them long to shun her completely because the men started turning up in an unending stream. What caused a stir of amazement was that Life was the first and the only woman to make a business out of selling herself. The men were paying her for her services. People's attitude to sex was broad and generous—it was recognised as a necessary part of human life, that it ought to be available whenever possible, like food and water, or else one's life would be extinguished, or one would get dreadfully ill. To prevent these catastrophes from happening, men and women generally had quite a lot of sex but on a respectable and human level, with financial considerations coming in as an afterthought. When the news spread around that this had now become a business in Life's yard, she attracted to herself a second wave of women—the beer-brewers of the village.

The beer-brewing women were a gay and lovable crowd who had emancipated themselves some time ago. They were drunk every day and could be seen staggering around the village, usually with a wide-eyed illegitimate baby hitched on to their hips. They also talked and laughed loudly and slapped each other on the back and had developed a language all their own:

"Boyfriends, yes. Husbands, uh, uh, no. Do this! Do that! We want to rule ourselves."

But they too were subject to the respectable order of village life. Many men passed through their lives but they were all for a time steady boyfriends. The usual arrangement was:

"Mother, you help me and I'll help you."

This was just so much eye-wash. The men hung around, lived on the resources of the women and during all this time they would part with about R2.00 of their own money. After about three months a tally-up would be made:

"Boyfriend," the woman would say. "Love is love and money is money. You owe me money." And he'd never be seen again and another scoundrel would take his place. And so the story went on and on. They found their queen in Life and like all queens, they set her activities apart from themselves; they never attempted to extract money from the constant stream of men because they did not

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know how, but they liked her yard. Very soon the din and riot of a Johannesburg township was duplicated, on a minor scale in the central part of the village. A transistor radio blared the day long. Men and women reeled around drunk and laughing and food and drink flowed like milk and honey. The people of the surroundings watched this phenomenon with pursed lips and commented darkly: "They'll all be destroyed one day like Sodom and Gomorrah."

Life, like the beer-brewing women, had a language of her own too. When her friends expressed surprise at the huge quantities of steak, eggs, liver, kidneys and rice they ate in her yard, the sort of food they too could now and then afford but would not dream of purchasing, she replied in a carefree, off-hand way: "I'm used to handling big money." They did not believe it; they were too solid to trust to the kind of luck that had very shaky foundations and as though to off-set some doom that might be just around the corner, they often brought along their own scraggy village chickens they reared in their yards, as offerings for the day's round of meals. And one of Life's philosophies on life they were to recall with trembling a few months later was: "My motto is: live fast, die young and have a good-looking corpse." All this was said with the bold, free joy of a woman who had broken all the social taboos. They never followed her to those dizzy heights.

A FEW MONTHS after Life's arrival in the village, the first hotel with its pub opened. It was initially shunned by all the women and even the beer-brewers considered they hadn't fallen *that* low yet—the pub was also associated with the idea of selling oneself. It became Life's favourite business venue. It simplified the business of making appointments for the following day. None of the men questioned their behaviour, nor how such an unnatural situation had been allowed to develop—they could get all the sex they needed for free in the village, but it seemed to fascinate them that they should pay for it for the first time. They had quickly got to the stage where they communicated with Life in shorthand language:

"When?" And she'd reply, "Ten o'clock", "When?" "Two o'clock", "When?" "Four o'clock" and so on.

And there'd be the roar of cheap small talk and much buttock slapping. It was her element and her feverish, glittering, brilliant black eyes swept around the bar, looking for everything and nothing at the same time.

Then one evening death walked quietly into the bar. It was Lesego, the cattle-man, just come in from his cattle-post, where he had been occupied for a period of three months. Men built up their own individual reputations in the village and Lesego's was one of the most respected and honoured. People said of him: "When Lesego has got money and you need it, he will give you what he has got and he won't trouble you about the date of payment. . . ." He was honoured from another point—for the clarity and quiet indifference of his thinking. People often found difficulty in sorting out issues or the truth in any debatable matter. He had a way of keeping his head above water, listening to an argument and always pronouncing the final judgment: "Well, the truth about this matter is. . . ." He was also one of the most successful cattle-men, with a balance of R7,000 in the bank and whenever he came into the village he lounged around and gossipped or attended village kgotla meetings, so that people had a saying: "Well, I must be getting about my business. I'm not like Lesego with money in the bank."

As usual, the brilliant radar eyes swept feverishly around the bar. They did the rounds twice that evening in the same manner, each time coming to a dead stop for a full second on the thin, dark, concentrated expression of Lesogo's face. There wasn't any other man in the bar with that expression; they all had sheepish, inane-looking faces. He was the nearest thing she had seen for a long time to the Johannesburg gangsters she had associated with—the same small, economical gestures, the same power and control; all the men near him quietened down and began to consult with him in low earnest voices; they were talking about the news of the day which never reached the remote cattle-posts. Whereas the other men all had to approach her, the third time her radar swept round, he stood his ground, turned his head slowly and then jerked it back slightly in a silent command: "Come here."

She moved immediately to his end of the bar.

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"Hullo," he said, in an astonishingly tender voice, and a smile flickered across his dark, reserved face. That was the sum total of Lesego, that basically he was a kind and tender man, that he liked women and had been so successful in that sphere that he took his dominance and success for granted. But they looked at each other from their own worlds and came to fatal conclusions—she saw in him the power and maleness of the gangsters; he saw the freshness and surprise of an entirely new kind of woman; he had left all his women after a time because they bored him and like all people who live an ordinary humdrum life, he was attracted to that undertone of hysteria in her.

Very soon they stood up and walked out together. A shocked silence fell upon the bar. The men exchanged looks with each other and the way these things communicate themselves, they knew that all the appointments had been cancelled while Lesego was there. And as though speaking their thoughts aloud, Sianana, one of Lesego's friends commented: "Lesego just wants to try it out like we all did because it is something new. He won't stay there when he finds out that it is rotten to the core."

BUT SIANANA WAS to find out that he did not fully understand his friend. Lesego was not seen at his usual lounging places for a week and when he emerged again it was to announce that he was to marry. The news was received with cold hostility. Everyone talked of nothing else; it was as impossible as if a crime was being committed before their very eyes. Sianana once more made himself the spokesman. He waylaid Lesego on his way to the village kgotla: "I am much surprised by the rumours about you, Lesego," he said, bluntly. "You can't marry that woman. She's a terrible fuck-about!"

Lesego stared back at him steadily, then he said in his quiet, indifferent way: "Who isn't here?"

Sianana shrugged his shoulders. The subtleties were beyond him, that whatever was going on, it wasn't commercial, it was human, but did that make it any better? Lesego liked to bugger up an argument like that with a straightforward point. As they walked along together Sianana shook his head several times to indicate that something important was eluding him, till at last, with a smile, Lesego said: "She has told me all about her bad ways. They are over."

Sianana merely compressed his lips and remained silent.

Life made the announcement too, after she was married, to all her beer-brewing friends: "All my old ways are over," she said. "I have now become a woman."

She still looked happy and hysterical. Everything came to her too easily, men, money and now marriage. The beer-brewers were not slow to point out to her, with the same amazement with which they had exclaimed over the steak and eggs, that there were many women in the village who had cried their eyes out over Lesego. She was very flattered.

Their lives, at least Lesego's, did not change much with marriage. He still liked his lounging around the village; the rainy season had come and life was easy for the cattle-men at this time because there was enough water and grazing for the animals. He wasn't the kind of man to fuss about the house and during this time he only made three pronouncements about the household. He took control of all the money. She had to ask him for it and state what it was to be used for. Then he didn't like the transistor radio blaring the whole day long.

"Women who keep that thing going the whole day have nothing in their heads," he said.

Then he looked down at her from a great height and commented finally and quietly: "If you go with those men again, I'll kill you."

This was said indifferently and quietly as though he never really expected his authority and dominance to encounter any challenge.

SHE HADN'T THE MENTAL equipment to analyse what hit her but something seemed to strike her a terrible blow behind the head. She instantly succumbed to the blow and rapidly began to fall apart. On the surface, the everyday round of village life was deadly dull in its even, unbroken monotony; one day slipped easily into another, drawing water, stamping corn, cooking food. But within this there were enormous tugs and pulls between people. Custom demanded that people care about each other and all day long there was

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this constant traffic of people in and out of each other's lives. Someone had to be buried; sympathy and help were demanded for this event—there were money loans, new-born babies, sorrow, trouble, gifts. Lesego had long been the king of this world; there was, every day, a long string of people, wanting something or wanting to give him something in gratitude for a past favour. It was the basic strength of village life. It created people whose sympathetic and emotional responses were always fully awakened and it rewarded them by richly filling in a void that was one big, gaping yawn. When the hysteria and cheap rowdiness were taken away, Life fell into the yawn; she had nothing inside herself to cope with this way of life that had finally caught up with her. The beer-brewing women were still there; they still liked her yard because Lesego was casual and easy-going, and all that went on in it now—like the old men squatting in corners with gifts: "Lesego, I had good luck with my hunting today. I caught two rabbits and I want to share one with you. . . ."—was simply the Tswana way of life they too lived. In keeping with their queen's new status, they said: "We are women and must do something."

They collected earth and dung and smeared and decorated Life's courtyard. They drew water for her, stamped her corn and things looked quite ordinary on the surface because Lesego also liked a pot of beer. No one noticed the expression of anguish that had crept into Life's face. The boredom of the daily round was almost throttling her to death and no matter which way she looked, from the beer-brewers to her husband to all the people who called, she found no one with whom she could communicate what became an actual physical pain. After a month of it she was near collapse. One morning she mentioned her agony to the beer-brewers: "I think I have made a mistake. Married life doesn't suit me."

And they replied sympathetically: "You are just getting used to it. After all it's a different life in Johannesburg."

The neighbours went further. They were impressed with a marriage they thought could never succeed. They started saying that one ought never to judge a human being who was both good and bad and Lesego had turned a bad woman into a good woman which was something they had never seen before. Just as they were saying this and nodding their approval, Sodom and Gomorrah started up all again. Lesego had received word late in the evening that the new-born calves at his cattle-post were dying and early the next morning he was off again, in his truck.

The old reckless wild woman awakened from a state near death with a huge sigh of relief. The transistor blared, the food flowed again, the men and women reeled around dead drunk. Simply by their din they beat off all the unwanted guests who nodded their heads grimly. When Lesego came back they were going to tell him this was no wife for him.

Three days later Lesego was unexpectedly back in the village. The calves were all anaemic and had to be brought into the vet for an injection. He drove his truck straight through the village to the vet's camp. One of the beer-brewers saw him and hurried in alarm to her friend.

"The husband is back," she whispered fearfully, pulling Life to one side.

"Agh," she said irritably.

SHE DID CLEAR UP the noise, the men, the drink, but a wild anger was driving her to break out of a way of life that was like a death to her. She told one of the men she'd see him at six o'clock. Just about five o'clock Lesego drove into the yard with the calves. There was no one immediately around to greet him. He jumped out of the truck and walked to one of the huts and pushed open the door. Life was sitting on the bed. She looked up silently and sullenly. He was a little surprised but his mind was still distracted by the calves. He had to settle them in the yard for the night.

"Will you make some tea?" he said. "I'm very thirsty."

"There's no sugar in the house," she said. "I'll have to get some."

Something irritated him but he hurried back to the calves and his wife walked out of the yard. He had just settled the calves when a neighbour walked in. He was very angry.

"Lesego," he said, bluntly. "We told you not to marry that woman. If you go to the

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yard of Radithobolo now you'll find her in bed with him. Go and see for yourself that you may leave that bad woman!"

Lesego stared at him for a moment quietly, then at his own pace as though there were no haste or chaos in his life he went to the hut they used as a kitchen. A tin full of sugar stood there. He turned and found a knife in the corner, one of the large ones he used for slaughtering cattle, and slipped it into his shirt. Then at his own pace he walked to the yard of Radithobolo. It looked deserted, except that the door of one of the huts was partially open and one closed. He kicked open the door of one of the closed huts and the man within shouted out in alarm. On seeing Lesego he sprang cowering into a corner. Lesego jerked his head back, indicating that the man could leave the room. But Radithobolo did not run far. He wanted to enjoy himself so he pressed himself into the shadows of the rubber hedge. He expected the usual husband and wife scene; the irate husband cursing at the top of his voice; the wife hysterical in her lies and self-defence. Only Lesego walked out of his yard and he held in his hand a huge, blood-stained knife. On seeing the knife Radithobolo immediately fell to the ground in a dead faint. There were a few people on the footpath and they shrank into the rubber hedge at the sight of that knife.

Very soon a wail arose. People clutched at their heads and began running in all directions crying yo! yo! yo! in their shock. It was some time before anyone thought of calling the police. They were so disordered, because murder, outright and violent, was a most uncommon and rare occurrence in village life. It seemed that only Lesego kept cool that evening. He was sitting quietly in his yard when the whole police force came tearing in. They looked at him in horror and began to thoroughly upbraid him for looking so unperturbed.

"You have taken a human life and you are cool like that!" they said, angrily. "You are going to hang by the neck for this. It's a serious crime to take a human life."

He did not hang by the neck. He kept that cool, head-above-water, indifferent look, right up to the day of his trial. Then he looked up at the judge and said calmly: "Well, the truth about this matter is, I had just returned from the cattle-post. I had trouble with my calves that day. I came home late and being thirsty, asked my wife to make me tea. She said there was no sugar in the house and left to buy some. My neighbour, Mathata, came in after this and said that my wife was not at the shops but in the yard of Radithobolo. I ought to go and see what she is doing in the yard of Radithobolo. I thought I would check up about the sugar first and in the kitchen I found a tin full of it. I was sorry and surprised to see this. Then a fire seemed to fill my heart. I thought that if she was doing a bad thing with Radithobolo as Mathata said, I'd better kill her because I cannot understand a wife who is so corrupt. . . ."

Lesego had been doing this for years, passing judgment on all aspects of life in his straightforward, uncomplicated way. The judge, who was a white man and therefore not involved in Tswana custom and its debates, was just as much impressed by Lesego's manner as all the village men had been.

"This is a crime of passion," he said, sympathetically. "So there are extenuating circumstances. But it is still a serious crime to take a human life so I sentence you to five years' imprisonment. . . ."

LESEGO'S FRIEND, Sianana, who was to take care of his business affairs while he was in jail, came to visit Lesego still shaking his head. Something was eluding him in the whole business as though it had been planned from the very beginning.

"Lesego," he said, with deep sorrow. "Why did you kill that fuck-about? You had legs to walk away. You could have walked away. Are you trying to show us that rivers never cross here? There are good women and good men but they seldom join their lives together. It's always this mess and foolishness. . . ."

A song by Jim Reeves was very popular at that time: *That's what happens when two worlds collide.* When they were drunk, the beer-brewing women used to sing it and start weeping. Maybe they had the last word on the whole affair.

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Melvin J. Lasky

Ulrike Meinhof & the Baader-Meinhof Gang

PRISONS come and go, but the enraged revolutionary spirit battles on. In 1789 the European Left began with the destruction of the Bastille, and a flaming Parisian *enragé* named Théroigne de Méricourt—the Ulrike Meinhof of her day—is supposed to have led the crowd in the storming of the prison walls.[1] This year, almost two centuries later in the history of distaff revolutionary fury, a brand-new prison has been built to hold Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader, and others of the historic Baader-Meinhof gang. It has been designed as the most secure penitentiary ever devised, with a safe if improvised new court-room in which the anarcho-terrorists will be tried before a West German high court. No German city felt itself safe enough against the threat of mob demonstrations and ingenious escape artists. So the state of Baden-Württemberg was drafted (since the tragic bombing of the U.S. Army's Heidelberg headquarters, within its state lines, was the most grievous charge); and something like twelve million D-marks were appropriated to underwrite a new palace of law and order in an open field just on the northern city limits of Stuttgart. The just-completed cement walls of the seven-storey *Hochhaus* will indeed a very formidable prison make. I am afraid that no Théroigne will succeed in storming it, and no Ulrike will ever manage to break out.

The finishing touches have just been put to the expensive electronic security system, but it may well be that it will all prove to be a grotesque white elephant. At the moment some 21 of the Baader-Meinhof captives are all going along with their announced end to their prolonged hunger strike (after having just threatened to add a "thirst-strike" to their campaign). One had already died in his prison cell (and the next day West Berlin's Chief Justice was murdered in reprisal). Several others had been on the critical list. As Andreas Baader grimly predicted, "Some of us just won't make it out alive. . . ." Ulrike Meinhof, always the more romantic spirit, put it more poetically: "Who doesn't resist, dies; who doesn't die, is buried alive. . . ." One prison official I spoke to recalled the old Nazi guile and said, "Don't worry, we won't give them any Horst Wessel martyrs. . . ." And his assistant reassured me that, being practical Germans, they had arranged the new "Baader-Meinhof annex" in Stuttgart-Stammheim to become the most modern and forward-looking vocational workshop for prisoners ever built. It may yet be the gang's most unimpeachable contribution to social progress.

But this, for all their philanthropic idealism, is the least of their real concerns. Extremists by both abstract ideology and personal temperament, they have driven themselves to an all-or-nothing position: either liberty, or death. The hunger strikes were in deadly earnest and no passing week-end trick; and they abandoned the self-destructive path only to seize upon a new hope. They would keep fit and wait, like their five comrades who were flown out by Lufthansa to South Yemen in exchange for the kidnapped Berlin politician Peter Lorenz. The prospect of freedom was beckoning.

THE DRAMA HAS BEGUN to take on a cliff-hanging suspense. Will the hard core of the Gang, the four main leaders whose trial in Stuttgart is about to begin, also pull something off before the formal course of justice throws the book at them? All four have proved themselves to be clever, resourceful, and fortified by the kind of faith which often helps miracles along. All have been in jail for almost three awful years, waiting for Germany's Chief Prosecutor to prepare the case

[1] For a portrait of Théroigne de Méricourt, see my "Lady on the Barricades", ENCOUNTER (July 1972), pp. 22–27.

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against them on charges which range from murder and kidnapping to bank-robbing and forgery.

Ulrike Meinhof is now 41, the daughter of two art-historians who died early, leaving her as the foster-child of an idealistic academic who guided her path to liberal-left causes. A gifted journalist, an affectionate mother, and an ebullient star of Germany's radical-chic circles, she has transformed herself into a ruthless urban guerrilla by some process which has defied analysis by police psychologists and political pundits. A measure of the revolutionary elixir was doubtless supplied by Andreas Baader, now 32, who turned his back early on the temptations of middle-class educational ideals (his father was an historian) and infatuated all those who ventured close to him with a Promethean mission of fire and immolation. His ideal "revolutionary bride" was the 34-year-old Gudrun Ensslin who tempered his burning faith in blind actionism with the theological instincts inherited from her religious background (her father is a Protestant pastor); and the spectacle of a loyal and loving pair in the underground even gave a romantic note to the gang's more steely concern with destroying German capitalism. Indeed for some part of the Far Left she appeared to be making perversely good her earlier liaison with the son of a famous Third Reich Nazi writer (she bore his child, he later committed suicide). The fourth in the Stuttgart quartet coming up for trial is Jan-Karl Raspe, now 31, whose degree in sociology marked him so strongly that even in the gang's inner circle he was thought of as a "typical intellectual."

Very much more about them—what they are really like, and especially now at what point their comradely tolerance of certain deviant fractions (like the 2nd June Movement) turns into a zealot's hatred of back-sliders who are sabotaging the true path forward—is not known to the police or the press or the public. If for no other reason the Germans find themselves "on a darkling plain/swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight. . . ."

FOR THE THIRTY-ODD MEMBERS of the Baader-Meinhof gang, scattered in a dozen or so top security jails of Western Germany (and West Berlin), life in prison thus presented at once new opportunities and new dangers. The system of communications which they set up to keep in touch with cell to cell must be the most cunning and extraordinary in the history of modern penitentiaries. Ulrike Meinhof continued to write her manifestos and they were regularly dispatched to the other incarcerated comrades as well as to the remnants of the illegal network on the outside. Andreas Baader, who has a staff of no less than twenty-two lawyers at his beck and call (Horst Mahler, now sentenced to 14 years, had nineteen), went on giving instructions on how to intensify the revolutionary struggle as well as to compose (and have distributed) detailed memoranda on at least five different promising ways to effect his escape from his cell. Their strategies were all coordinated: when to begin a hunger strike, how far to carry it, when to end it, and how to put pressure on comrades who were back-sliding. One prison warden told me that one of the girls was for months regularly put—falsely—on the official medical "danger" list for fear of the "consequences" should it become known to the others that she had broken off without official "Red Army" approval. When the "execution order" was put out for one of their young comrades who had talked confidentially to the police—Ulrich Schmücker's corpse was found in Berlin's Grunewald, efficiently disposed of by the "June 2nd Movement"[2]—there were purloined copies of the incriminating police report found circulating in the Baader-Meinhof cells.

This was all possible because the gang took brilliant and resourceful advantage of the fairly liberal German prison regulations. There is no doubt that not a few of the Baader-Meinhof lawyers (three of them have been officially charged)—including many young law-school graduates of revolutionary Marxist persuasion who, like Mafia mouthpieces, are not mere hired defenders but partners in the Syndicate—have been quite improperly smuggling documents in and out. Surprise police raids in the cells unearthed whole files of circulars, escape plans, research assignments, political orders (including select lists of Bonn politicians to be targeted), and agit-prop leaflets. Not even Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky in Siberia, writing pamphlets and planning 1905 and 1917, enjoyed such tactical freedom.

They claimed, of course, that they were being subjected to what became a national slogan of left-wing protest: *Isolations-folter*, or the torture of solitary confinement. The German police

[2] See Friedhelm Kemna, "Death of a Nightingale", ENCOUNTER (September 1974).

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authorities, trying to prevent prison revolts and break-outs (as well as the indoctrination of other prisoners), did separate them and isolate them. Still, they had regular, almost daily visits from their attorneys; most had access to radio and television sets; a few were given extra cells to accommodate their libraries of Marxist literature, including the complete anarcho-terrorist bibliography from Bakunin to Marighella and Régis Debray.[3]

Their greatest success was in the effective exploitation of the guilt-ridden German liberal conscience. Even thirty years after the end of the Third Reich the new West German democracy is extremely sensitive to the shadows of the Nazi past. The rule of law must be protected and over-protected for fear of charges of *"Gestapo"* methods and attitudes. Until recently no action by either the Government or the Bar Association was taken against the gang's wayward lawyers; the half-hearted attempt in Bonn to have each meeting of prisoner with counsel attended by a court official has proved abortive. And no firm guidance has yet been given to the doctors who try to cope with dozens of hunger-strikers, especially recalcitrant patients who have to be subdued and strapped in order to be force-fed ("life is sacred"); the doctors are sometimes tempted to let them do themselves in if so they wish ("suicide is also a freedom"). The practice of medicine and the law in Western Germany today is afflicted with a kind of double curse. They are damned if they do, and damned if they don't. Let them die (and Home Secretary Roy Jenkins in Britain had no trouble at all with his Anglo-Saxon doctrine that the I.R.A. prisoners had a perfect right to starve themselves to death), and German doctors are accused of the kind of indifference to life which we remember from the Nuremberg Trials. Force them to live (and I have seen how brutal a procedure doctors and nurses have to go through in order to force-feed a hunger-striker who resists), and they are seen to be treating prisoners like cattle. Try to tighten up loopholes in the law in order to prevent cunning revolutionary terrorists from planning a bombing or a political assassination on the outside, and the cry goes up that Fascism has come again.

Even the attempt (by an influential socialist Minister of Justice, Diether Posser) to introduce the Anglo-American practice of immunity or clemency for "crown [or state's] witnesses" who are prepared to cooperate—for there seems to be no other way of gathering enough good hard evidence—was greeted with fearful cries of how such "shabby illegal deals and compromises"

[3] They occasionally soiled their fingers by glancing at "bourgeois-fascist" literature. After trying to read Solzhenitsyn, Holger Meins wrote: "Most intellectuals are vermin, and Solzhenitsyn belongs to this rot. In *Gulag* he has unmasked himself with his attack on the Revolution. . . . Away with this vermin. . . ."

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would simply undermine all justice in the land.

BUT IF the Baader-Meinhof gang has had its victories despite the prison walls, revolutionary life under such circumstances is not without its special spiritual difficulties. I have seen one devastating document, prepared by other revolutionary theoreticians on the outside, which subjected the Red Army Fraction to ruthless ideological criticism. Copies were found in many of the cells. No one sees through orthodoxy like a heretic; no one can expose a Maoist like a Trotskyite. I wondered whether Baader or Meinhof could really cope with the grievous Marxist charges against them. Why did they call themselves "political prisoners", when *all* prisoners in a period of capitalist decline (from pickpockets to rapists) were products of a political system? Why did they, all scions of the middle class, flaunt in such an élitist way their battery of defence attorneys when so many poor convicts were so helpless? How could they be so arrogant as to dare to raise the call for Hunger Strikes among the prison population when most, in only for short sentences, would not want to risk permanent injury to their health? Baader-Meinhof were guilty of splitting tactics, élitist deviations, petty-bourgeois illusions, infantile fantasies.

I have also seen the reply to the Far Left composed by Gudrun Ensslin in a desperate effort to defend the Baader-Meinhof revolutionary credentials. Ensslin is a well-educated daughter of a well-known Protestant theologian; but if she ever had the mental capacity to cope with ideological problems, there was no sign of it in this pitiful document. It is one of the "cell circulars" found in a police raid, and it is a mixture of banal sloganeering, hysterical argumentativeness ("why-don't-you-see-that-we're-right-and-you're-wrong"), and sheer intellectual exhaustion. One begins to believe that, although they are not "totally isolated" and certainly not being tortured, life in prison is having its deadly effects.[4]

When Horst Mahler declined to fly off to freedom in the March exchange for the kidnapped Peter Lorenz, he offered a few tired and unreal Leninist phrases about not deserting the class struggle and remaining "loyal to the Revolution." The real reason may well have been his fear that his notorious defection to Maoist heresies would have called for his "political execution" by his old comrades.

THEY HAVE desensitivised themselves to a horrific extent. One can only shudder at the re-Nazified rhetoric used when Meinhof demands the "concentration [sic] of all prisoners", or when Holger Meins in a brief manifesto repeats Hitler's old favourite word "KAMPF" a dozen times. The code-word for murder in their little lists of enemies to be eliminated is *Total-lösung*, or "Total Solution" (not exactly unrelated to the Nazi word for Auschwitz's *Endlösung*, or "Final Solution"). Extreme situations exacerbate extremist attitudes, and in one Baader-Meinhof document even George Orwell's *1984* slogan is outdone as the call went out for "24 hours of HATE each day." One begins to surmise that there is a kind of deeper, and perhaps subconscious, meaning to the various nicknames they have given themselves in order to disguise their subterranean communications system. Ulrike Meinhof's alias is *Therèse*, possibly a saintly note from her old Catholic affections, as she masochistically prepares herself for martyrdom. Andreas Baader is known as *Ahab*, and surely Melville would have understood the self-destructive obsession with revenge against a hated monster.

One of the leaders of the Baader-Meinhof gang has indeed already destroyed himself (although the charge from the Left is that the doctors neglected him, or the jailers killed him, or the System did him in). Holger Meins, aged 33, once a student at the Berlin Film Academy, was arrested in a Frankfurt shoot-out (1 June 1972), together with Andreas Baader who was slightly wounded; as the police dragged him out of his hide-out, he gave forth unearthly screams and shouts (the "eight howls of Holger Meins" were the dramatic highlight of the year's TV action-news) and promptly collapsed. After a hunger strike of two months had, despite forced feeding, reduced him to a dying wreck of 84 lb, he expired suddenly on a Saturday afternoon (9 November 1974). At his funeral Rudi Dutschke, the Berlin

[4] Both documents have now been published by the West German Ministry of the Interior: *Dokumentation über Aktivitäten Anarchistischer Gewalttäter in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bonn, 1974). Additional material has been collected in *Die Baader-Meinhof-Gruppe* (ed. Rauball, de Gruyter-Verlag, Berlin, 1973); and in *Vorbereitung der RAF-Prozesse* (Rote Hilfe Verlag, Berlin, 1974). For a concise historical summary, see H. J. Horchem, *Extremisten in einer selbstbewussten Demokratie* (Herderbücherei, Freiburg, 1975).

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student leader whose bullet-wounded brain has presumably recovered from the assassination attempt in 1968, cried out that "*We will struggle on, Holger!* . . ." and returned to his writing desk in Denmark.

The rest of the Left was more restrained, even sedulously indifferent, especially after the brutal murder of Berlin's Chief Justice, Gunther von Drenkmann, the very next day[5]; and in the general public outrage and indignation an opportunity was lost to fashion an heroic legend of victimisation and martyrdom without which no revolutionary mythology can flourish.

THE BAADER-MEINHOF PRISONERS suffered on in their hunger strike, but they cut no heroic figure even in their own backyard. When a number of women prisoners of their so-called "Red Army Fraction" were transferred from their cells into the hospital wing of their Berlin penitentiary, twelve other prisoners were prompted into a hunger strike of their own. What could the Baader-Meinhof Leninists make of the old Bolshevik stratagem of turning the guns the other way? Others, too, could protest, raise demands, put the pressure on; and they insisted on the removal of the militant politicos. They charged that life in the ward was being made intolerable by the terrorists who dictated what television programmes were to be seen and persisted in agitational discussions until all hours in the morning. They claimed that other ordinary prisoners were being offered money bribes to go along with them. They wanted them out; and after a fortnight of hunger-striking they succeeded in persuading the West Berlin prison authorities to remove the militants, and return them to their cells. That meant, of course, special privileges and exclusive medical attention; which, in turn, cut them off from even more friends and sympathisers. I spoke to one prison director—she happened to be an old comrade of Ulrike Meinhof's in the movement of the 1960s—who could not disguise her fury and outrage.

"From so-called friends of the masses they have become enemies of the people," she told me. "They wanted to help and are now only hurting. They loved mankind in the abstract but cared for nobody in particular. I can't get an extra TV set for my teenage delinquents, because they've got them all. I can't get hold of a doctor in an emergency case, because they're monopolising medical attention. With such friends of the injured and downtrodden who needs oppressors? . . ."

ONCE, on a West German TV programme, I was asked whether I thought that "Communist Gold"—covert funding from East Germany, from the Russian secret services, etc.—played any role in the efflorescence of the German New Left in the 1960s. I tended to pooh-pooh the idea. There are those who always think an indigenous radicalism must really be manipulated by foreign string-pullers (*cf.* the FBI/CIA's vain efforts to locate Cuban or Chinese or Algerian sources for the funds behind the SDS or the Black Panthers and the like). But sometimes it *is* true, and occasionally it is decisive. We now know from the historians that Lenin received millions from the Kaiser's secret political fund, and it helped to finance a plethora of Bolshevik publications in 1917–18; we also now know that the CIA secretly supported a great many European activities during the epoch of the Cold War which helped to stabilise post-War Western security (and to "destabilise" the attempts of a Communist and neo-Marxist Left to regroup after 1945).[6]

In the emergence of the powerful German New Left in the 1960s a magazine called *Konkret*, brilliantly edited by Klaus Rainer Röhl, played a central role. Its sloganeering was ingenious, its editorial style modern and adventurous (it preferred the methods of *Playboy* to those of *Pravda*); and it rallied a wide front of agitators, students, anarchists, poets, terrorists, pornopoliticians and assorted disenchanted intellectual spirits longing for a new Utopian fatherland. Perhaps more than any other single factor it was instrumental in such victories as the German militants achieved: the capture of Berlin's Free University, the tens of thousands of APO marchers descending on Bonn, the proliferation of militant fractions prepared to take power through the barrel of a gun. Among the latter,

[5] There is some evidence that the Judge should not (according to plan) have been shot but taken alive from his birthday party, and held as a hostage for the release of Ulrike Meinhof. There were even wild rumours that Jean-Paul Sartre would be held for a similar purpose.

[6] See Joel Carmichael's two studies in ENCOUNTER: "Trotsky's Agony" (May/June 1972) and his "The 'Scandal' of 1917: German Money & Bolshevik Honour" (March 1974); also his recently published biography of Trotsky (Hodder & Stoughton, 1975). The documentary evidence is in Z. A. B. Zeman, *Germany and the Revolution in Russia 1915–1918* (1958). For the C.I.A., see the account in L. B. Kirkpatrick, *The U.S. Intelligence Community* (1973).

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the so-called Baader-Meinhof Group is the most notorious. Röhl was married to Ulrike Meinhof. Both were secret members of the Communist Party. Their influential magazine, *Konkret*, was financed by secret Communist funds, privately arranged by Röhl and Meinhof in East Berlin and filtered in devious ways through Prague.

It was, until Röhl recently confessed and confirmed it, almost unbelievable. Russians are known to finance good and reliable Communist cadres, enrolled in the Party or in some controllable front organisation. Röhl and Meinhof, despite their secret party cards, could only represent for them what Lenin had denounced as "the infantile Left", crowded with petty-bourgeois playboys and frustrated females. Yet they went ahead. For something in the vicinity of an estimated million marks—the cost of a few nuts and bolts in a Sputnik—they disrupted on a major scale the most powerful NATO partner, turned the German youth movement into a mass force of anti-Americanism, and rehabilitated the theory and practice of Marxian Revolution. We do not know what section in Russia's Central Intelligence was responsible for such ideological free-wheeling, but it was surely no bad investment in "destabilisation." Röhl now admits—for the first time, in his recently published memoirs[7]—that he was a secret member of the Communist Party from 1956 to 1964, that he and Ulrike Meinhof (whom he married in 1961 and who bore him twins in 1962) made their illegal contacts with their Eastern control officers by slipping across the border which divides the city of Berlin.

They were for many years given extraordinarily wide latitude. No hard political line was ever obvious. They often criticised the hands that fed them. They were free to thrash about in all the sub-cultures of the West German radical chic: the new Ruhr rich who were titillated by the idea of capitalism dying; the Pop & Drug Communes; the Pill & Promiscuity Cults; the Brechtian avant-garde. It became a very popular front uniting practically everything on the Left except, of course, the proletariat. But this was, like the flowering New Left everywhere in the Western world, essentially a middle-class phenomenon exercising its propensities for abstract idealism, for fun and excitement and impassioned commitment, until it got weary of its own excess—and became frightened of the degeneration into random peripheral violence of a hard core of true believers who began to practise what they preached.

The story of Ulrike Meinhof—not unlike the cases of Patty Hearst (of the Symbionese Liberation Army) and Bernadine Dohrn (of the Weathermen) in the U.S.A. or (on a dottier, more eccentric English level) Dr Rose Dugdale in Britain—sums up the extremism of an historic decade. But the Meinhof case is more illuminating, for it sheds light more vividly on the major institutions of the most prosperous and powerful society in Western Europe today: West Germany's police, its press, its intellectuals and churchmen, its television and volatile public opinion, as all get caught up in the tragedy of one ill-fated female revolutionary who convinced herself that power can come out of the lighted fuse of a home-made bomb.

FOR, IN THE FIVE YEARS or so that the Germans have been wrestling with the problem of the "Baader-Meinhof Gang", often only a shorthand name for various Far Left Groups of revolutionary terrorists, they have demonstrated more dramatically one upsetting lesson that is being learned everywhere in the West. Liberal-industrial society is peculiarly vulnerable to the machinations of a handful of extremists, armed only with an ideology, a few guns and an explosive device, and a fanatical willingness to sacrifice themselves for the cause. But perhaps—and this gave the Germans, so easily susceptible to Spenglerian pessimism, much heart—it was, like so much else in the 20th century, only a passing fashion? The Arab guerrillas and the IRA bombsters were obviously different. There, behind the violence of the desperadoes, lay deep and grievous issues of religion, nationalism, and social conflict. But how serious and permanent a threat to established society could come from a small band of agitated middle-class idealists, conspiring as "Weathermen" or "Angry Brigades" or "Red Army Fractions"?

The German police, enjoying the same superior odds as the F.B.I. or the British constabulary, were finally satisfied that they had cracked the Movement. What they took to be the "hard core" elements were all behind bars. Things were quite back to normal. The reservoir of student militants began to dry up as universities returned to humdrum academic pursuits; and when a bank was raided the culprit was again a nice mediocre

[7] Klaus Rainer Röhl, *Fünf Finger sind keine Faust* (Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Cologne, 1974).

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bank-robber, not a self-styled "urban guerrilla" seeking new funds to stock up the arsenal for some impending bloody revolution.

But since when do stone walls a prison make? They would, one way or another, cheat bourgeois justice. Suddenly in February they abandoned the self-destructive strategy in order to keep fit and to wait for the last days.

The new strategy proved to be audacious, brilliant, and totally successful. Underground comrades in the so-called "June 2nd Movement" kidnapped a Berlin politician on the eve of the city elections in February. Within 72 hours all of their demands had been unconditionally conceded by the Bonn government, and the first five of the convicted Baader-Meinhof terrorists strolled out of their cells on a red carpet to liberty.

I HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTED a more bewildered and unsettled public opinion in post-War Germany than in these days as the Baader-Meinhof drama escalated into an hysterical issue of the Bonn Republic's "internal security." With what relatively sober equanimity had other grave national issues been faced—the Berlin Wall, the division of the Fatherland into two Germanies, the collapse of Willy Brandt and his *Ostpolitik*. If the kidnapping of a local West Berlin politician, Peter Lorenz, effects the release of five political prisoners—and Lufthansa flew them out first-class to freedom in the Middle East, with twenty thousand marks apiece in their pockets—how long before all the others are similarly released?

It is hard to say which the Germans found more shocking, upsetting and disorienting—the cool professional efficiency with which the "June 2nd" terrorists conducted the operation or the honourable way they kept to the promise not to harm the hostage if every one of the conditions were unconditionally fulfilled. They were, and they did. Tens of millions of Germans followed every scene of the March spectacle on television. They congratulated themselves on putting one man's life before the interests of the State—"And how often," one German said to me, "have we done that in our history?"—and privately pitied themselves for their helplessness and humiliation. Were there any alternatives? How could they, in affluent unendangered peace-time, go in for a hard "Israeli strategy" (or even "Trudeau toughness") and risk one after another bloody shoot-out on their city streets? Could they dare go in for hard-hat resistance without moving precariously towards another police-state?

"Humiliation was the order of the day," a writer in West Berlin solemnly recorded. "Perhaps never in history, since a medieval Holy Roman Emperor went penitent to Canossa, has a proud nation debased itself so abjectly. . . ." Even the liberal-left Hamburg weekly, *Die Zeit*, in justifying the softness of a humanitarian attitude against the hawk-like demands for official revenge or police reprisal, could not help feeling the profound historic nature of the decision. For where have all the old traditions gone? Once upon a time, as Marion Dönhoff sadly recalled, there was a King Frederick of Prussia who left orders that should he be captured by the enemy, no concessions whatsoever should be made on his behalf to the blackmailers. Yet when one national newspaper put the awful and inevitable question to leading German and Israeli politicians —"Would you, if taken hostage, wish to be exchanged for convicted terrorists?"—all the Israelis said No! and none of the Germans wanted to offer an answer. All deplored the "demagogy", hated the "hypocrisy", reviled the "irrelevance" of the inquiry. They conceded that there would be more abductions and yet another round of blackmailing demands. But a civilised state—and how desperately proud the West Germans are of their post-War liberal humanism!—could do no other. Only Countess Dönhoff went so far as to remember the old Frederickian maxim, "Better that a man die than Justice disappear."

The Baader-Meinhof militants, with weapons in their hands, may have failed to make their revolution, but they have succeeded in burying old Prussia and severely wounding the body politic of present-day Germany.

NOT THE LEAST historic aspect of this unprecedented Berlin incident was the impressment of the nation's television screens to serve the master-plan of the terrorist kidnappers. "For 72 hours", one T.V. editor told me, "we just lost control of the medium. It was theirs, not ours. . . . We shifted shows in order to meet their time-table. Our cameras had to be in position to record each of the released prisoners as they boarded the plane to freedom, and our news coverage had to include prepared statements at their dictate. . . . It's never ever happened before! There is plenty of underworld crime on our screens, but up till now Kojak and Columbo were always in charge. . . . Now it was the real thing, and it was the gangsters who wrote the script and programmed the mass

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media. We preferred to think that we were being 'flexible', but actually we were just helpless, as helpless as the police and the Bonn government. . . . Surely it must be the first recorded case of how to hijack a national TV network! . . ."

Noteworthy in the whole political uproar which followed—it ranged from angry demands to shoot all the Baader-Meinhof prisoners by drumhead firing-squads to weary suggestions for dumping the whole gang on to some Sahara air-strip—was the relatively sober and calm popular approval which the Mayor in West Berlin and the Chancellor in West Germany (both supported by the opposition conservatives) received for carrying through the Lorenz deal. A poll recorded that 75% thought the exchange to be "right" (24% "wrong"). But a clear majority felt that no such exchanges of politicians for terrorists should be done in the future and that a return of capital punishment would help to reinforce domestic security and law-and-order.

HOW DID THEY, a motley band of middle-class boys and girls, become gun-men (and gun-women)? The contemporary talk about force and violence as the essential elements in the transformation of an evil society was still the same theoretical chit-chat which had animated the revolutionary fantasies of Marxists for a century from Engels to Bebel and Kautsky. But who had ever fingered a gun or fired a single shot? The discussions I once listened to in the "Smolny Institute", the very centre of radical militancy in the Berlin universities of the 1960s, revolved only about the usefulness of stones against city-centre shop-windows—and whether, in this connection, apples should be considered "hard" or "soft" weapons in the street-fighting to come![8]

Soon a real weapon, with a shiny barrel and a full cartridge, had its premiere on the German New Left. Röhl, self-styled pacemaker as the editor and publisher of the most popular left-wing newspaper, bought himself a small calibre pistol called a Landmann-Preetz. (It later became the favourite hand-gun of the Baader-Meinhof gang, just as the *BMW* automobile became their favourite get-away car, partly because it was fast and elegant, partly because of its acronymic coincidence.) One winter evening in 1968, in Röhl's villa in Hamburg-Blankenese, he exhibited his gun to his editors and visiting student revolutionaries. It was marvelled at, and was passed from hand to hand "like some newly-forged weapon at a gathering of primitive tribal chieftains. . . ." One fondled it in his lap, wouldn't let it go, and just wanted to know: "It really shoots? real bullets? and they can really knock somebody off? . . ." They all had their first target practice later that evening, firing wildly in the Hamburg garden at bottles and lamp-bulbs, till the neighbours threatened to call the police. As Röhl says, "we were all in the romantic phase of our *Viva Maria*! world. . . ."

And in that phase, Ulrike Meinhof found inspiration less in Marx and Mao than in the glamorous figures of the two revolutionary Marias (Jeanne Moreau and Brigitte Bardot) committed to liberate the poor; but she still found horror in the idea, and especially the noise, of guns going off. Her brother-in-law, Wolfgang Röhl, then 16, once took a walk in the woods with her and suddenly drew his pistol and fired with youthful bravura a few random shots in the air. Ulrike broke down in a paroxysm of tears. Her husband says that she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown; and neither of them talked with Wolfgang for a full year. Klaus Röhl ascribes her reaction in part to her "Christian pacifism" with which she began her career in crusading politics, and in part to the "constant terrible head pains" after her brain-tumour operation which left her with a "panicky fear" of even the bang from a child's toy pistol.

WHAT A FAR CRY all this is from the underground arsenals of the Baader-Meinhof group of only a few years later, the most formidable private collection of ordnance in post-War Germany since the U.S. Army smashed the *Werewolf* redoubt in 1945.[9] Machine-gun for machine-gun and grenade for grenade it might well have been a match for the peace-time weaponry at the command of, say, Al Capone on the eve of the the Valentine's Day massacre. But the characters in Chicago's underworld were "born killers", nature's own gangsters who were conveniently endowed with the hot blood or the cold blood which the contract called for.

Here, in the underground of the Left, the

[8] See my account in "Revolution Diary", ENCOUNTER (August 1968), pp. 81–92.

[9] In the true fair-share spirit of anarcho-idealism there is evidently more than enough to go around. The weapons that were used recently by the Japanese "Red Army" in their hostage action in The Hague (last September) were the same type as the Baader-Meinhof weapons, all deriving from a successful raid on a West German NATO munitions depot.

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killers were not born, but made. Ideology made them and re-made them. There in the underworld no idea was ever needed to rationalise a South Side hijack, to justify bumping off a rival or taking anybody for a little ride. Here in the underground an elaborate ideology was evolved, which mixed Marxist catch-phrases with theological casuistry and religious intensity. Who needed a social and political theory to get rid of Legs Diamond or Buggsy Siegel? But here we have the difference between, if you wish, the gorilla and the guerrilla. Baader-Meinhof victims got theirs in a higher cause: the librarian in the Berlin reading-room hit by a bullet during Ulrike's raid to liberate Baader; the night watchman blown up by a bomb on the Wannsee; the two cops in Hamburg shot down while walking their night beat and checking on anything suspicious; a detective, torn apart by dum-dum bullets; the 17 employees wounded by bomb fragments in a Hamburg newspaper-office explosion; an American officer and two sergeants killed by a bomb in the Heidelberg U.S. Army headquarters; West Berlin's Chief Justice, a life-long socialist, shot down on his birthday by gunmen carrying bouquets of flowers.

Ideology trained them to apologise for (to borrow Auden's ugly phrase) "the necessary murder." The first corpses for which they learned to feign indifference were bodies disposed of in far-away places. When Hue was liberated by some U.S. Army units in South Viet Nam, a number of West German Red Cross doctors had been found murdered. In *Konkret*, which Röhl edited and for which Ulrike Meinhof was then the star columnist, it was explained away as "not murder, but a political execution. . . . For revolutionary peasants are entitled to be angry with doctors who do not understand the basic problems; medical activity without a proper social and political consciousness is itself murderous. . . ." Ho Chi-Minh, whose revered name they chanted for years in all the streets of Germany, gave them an iron sense of the necessary murder; and a transatlantic infatuation with the Black Power romanticism of Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver gave them an exotic sense of "Oh how beautiful it is to kill, baby. . . ." They copied all the phrases from the catechism of *Burn, Baby, Burn* and their German conversation and Teutonic manifestos are studded with *cool* and *high* and *right on* and *off the pigs*. ("Pigs" they had to render as "*Bullen*" for there is often a touch of endearment about calling somebody a "*Schwein.*") When two innocent bystanders were killed by rocks in a Munich *SDS* demonstration, Horst Mahler's reply, cool and unperturbed, signalised the transition from *Viva Maria* to *'Bonnie & Clyde'* in the revolutionary scenario. Mahler said: "When I drive off in my car, I can't know beforehand if a tyre will go flat. . . ." The deaths were only traffic accidents.

THE BRUTALISATION went apace with their new ideological fanaticism. Dieter Kunzelmann (just released from a Berlin jail, but he had his last days off so that he could officially campaign as a local Mao-Communist candidate!) went so far as to insist—in his explanation of why he had planted a bomb in Berlin's Fasanenstrasse Synagogue, rebuilt after the Nazis burned it down in 1938—that his comrades just had to get over their *Judenknax*, by which he meant "their thing about the Jews" (*i.e.* post-1945 German pro-Semitic liberalism). One of his collaborators, Georg von Rauch (killed by the police in a street shoot-out), argued for greater consequence in eliminating political enemies: "We must be clear about this: that in such actions our humanism will be transformed. . . . In such situations we must, I must, simply liquidate human feeling."

It took, then, at least a number of years before Ulrike, who wept at the sound of a toy pistol, could take joy at her unerring marksmanship on a firing-range in one of Arafat's Jordanian commando centres. Patty Hearst learned to fondle her machine-gun in something under 90 days, but in California everything grows fast, and indeed the precepts of Marxian-Maoist revolution can evidently be learned there in an overnight crash course. Ulrike had to be sure that Hegel (and the True Laws of History) was on her side; and of this she reassured herself by her exegetical study of the writings of Herbert Marcuse, whom she still re-reads and recommends to other comrades from her book-lined prison cell. She had to be sure that Late Capitalism with all its Imperialist contradictions was now in its absolutely final and mortal stage; and she took time to read the financial pages on exports, imports, and the movements of capital to convince herself that the end was nigh. She had to be certain that the organised working-class, with its reformist trade-union leaders, was a lost potential; and that therefore a small remnant of the faithful had to rise up and act on their own, but in the name of oppressed and bewildered masses yearning for authentic freedom.

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These became articles of faith. Had not Jean-Paul Sartre made it all so clear? Only the Revolution was a true existentialist task for authentic persons. The Few were really the Many. And—most important—Death was Life. Sartre had indeed made it transparent when, in a famous passage, he underlined the true meaning of Frantz Fanon's ideology. A guerrilla fighter slays his enemy. In that act of pure violence there is a double act of liberation: the victim has been freed from his false role, the victor has freed his own spirit for authentic manhood. No need here for old-fashioned sentimentalities about blood watering the tree of liberty. The Killer & his Victim is the drama of emancipation. The dialectic between life and death was all.

TWO SOULS, as the Goethean phrase goes, dwelt within Ulrike's breast, and there was a strange class struggle taking place between grim Old Left earnestness and light-hearted New Left liberation. The Röhl/Meinhof *Konkret* was a mixture of sex and politics. Röhl was a kind of ideological Hugh Hefner, alternating nude pin-ups (lightly disguised as a method of "sexual enlightenment" for the young) with militant left-wing propaganda (zippily spiced with a marijuanised modishness). At times Röhl screwed the circulation up to a quarter-of-a-million. When he (and/or his more puritanical Marxist militants) thought they could "cut the pubic hair" and find more place for Marxism, the circulation sank rapidly; and back came the nudes.

What secret guilt complexes must this sex-and-revolution compromise have induced in Ulrike? She took her ten grand a year for a dozen brief columns (they were worth it, if only for their decent grammar and vocabulary), bought herself *boutique* dresses and fancy jewellery; but she longed for the day when she could strike a pure and uncompromising blow for the oppressed masses. Meanwhile she was trapped in the world of radical chic (called by the Germans *Schickeria*), and she did the cocktail party circuit from Inge Feltrinelli's in Milan to Gabriele Henkel's in Düsseldorf. When, finally, she did manage to make her break—leaving her husband, moving to West Berlin with her twin girls—she missed the old world. She devoted herself to the plight of the underprivileged (from orphans to convicts), recruiting for the Revolution as she went along.[10] But how could she fill the vacuum? She moved from the super-culture of artists and poets and witty millionaires to the sub-culture of shabby, fanatical, blue-jeaned conspirators. She had previously interviewed Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin when they set a Frankfurt department store ablaze, and she caused a sensation by approving their act of political arson. It was a fateful pronouncement when she wrote in her *Konkret* column that what was "Progressive" about burning down the place was not the destruction of the shoddy goods which a rotten Consumption society was trying to peddle, but rather the fact that it was an audacious act which broke the Law. She said yes to "the Criminality of the Deed"; and when in Berlin she joined Baader and Ensslin in what was still known then as the "Baader-Mahler" group, she was prepared to go on to do likewise.

BUT FIRST SHE HAD TO DO a couple of things to settle with the past. There was her former husband, Klaus Röhl, who still wanted her back; and there was her old magazine which still wanted her as its "star Kolumnist." Ah, but there is no fury like that of a female revolutionary who is being tempted to go back to the wasted passions of yesterday. She wrote a savage editorial attacking *Konkret* and its editorial line and forced it to be printed. (Her ex-husband wrote a lame, and rather loving, reply.) She infiltrated the magazine with her cronies who were to "bore from within" and then take over the still-successful left-wing fortnightly with a "democratic vote of co-determination." (The Machiavellian coup just barely failed to come off, partly because of a passing remark on the telephone by one of the Röhl/Meinhof twins as to what *"Mutti"* was up to these days . . . .) If she failed to smash her old paper which had now become an "organ of the Counter-Revolution" (here in her letter of resignation, some say, began her political paranoia), there was one other target easier to hit. One other objective waited to be ravaged, and thus finally free her from the shameful era of "Sex & Politics." Another fraction of her Berlin cronies sets out in convoy to her old Blankenese villa in the very best part of Hamburg. They storm and devastate the "once happy home" (Röhl is still sentimental about it). A phallus is painted on the front door. Lamps, furniture,

[10] The *Konkret* columns have been collected in *Ulrike Meinhof: Dokumente einer Rebellion* (ed. Röhl, Konkret-Verlag, Hamburg, 1972). For her social work in "the lower depths", see Ulrike Marie Meinhof, *Bambule: Fürsorge—Sorge für wen?* (Wagenbach-Verlag, Berlin, 1972).

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gramophone are smashed. The gang gets together and collectively urinates on the old double bed in the master bedroom.

Her ex-husband, never strong on analysis, missed the point of it all. He convinced himself it was a put-up job (for after all there were two reporters from *Der Spiegel* riding along with the convoy, interviewing and taking pictures, and somebody was seen paying off some of the unideological rowdies in the gang). A year later, when his children mysteriously disappeared, he began to comprehend that the ruthless revolutionary struggle, which he had been preaching for so long, was now being turned personally against him. A Berlin court had given him the legal right to the twin girls, now 8, but they were nowhere to be found. *Interpol* was alerted, and searched everywhere in Europe. Months went by without a clue. Through a number of curious accidents he found them, alive and well, in Rome; they had been hidden away in Sicily where they had learned to sing *Bandiera rossa* and other revolutionary ditties. *"Evviva comunismo—e libertà,"* they chanted. But the rice in Italy had been bitter; and they didn't really care for the occasional pull on a joint to which their hash-smoking guardians occasionally treated them.[11]

The plan had been to take them on to the Middle East and place them in a Palestinian orphanage, not far from the *El Fatah* training camp where Ulrike Meinhof with Baader and Ensslin and others of the Red Army Fraction were currently taking lessons for their careers as German guerrilla fighters. The gang joined in target practice and a little Jew-hating; but their drinking, smoking, and sexual habits were found offensive and the German New Left's whole "Red Army" was soon expelled. Ulrike's twin girls were thus left stranded in mid-passage. As it happened, in one of King Hussein's offensives against the *El Fatah* that Palestinian orphanage was almost completely destroyed by bombs. Röhl likes to believe that his good luck has something to do with the fact that he and a young Arab student named Yassir Arafat had met at a Communist Youth Festival in Prague in 1956 and were "good comrades."[12]

THE BAADER-MEINHOF ALLIANCE had been sealed in blood in Berlin in May 1970. Andreas Baader's act of arson two years earlier had a kind of Promethean fascination for Ulrike, and she plotted to liberate him from his prison tribulations. Even though the wardens were generally aware of an escape plan they gave him permission to continue his "sociological research" in various West Berlin libraries. On 14 May he was allowed to visit, under guard, the Sociology Institute in the university precinct of Dahlem. He claimed to be writing a book on youth problems for the Berlin radical publisher Klaus Wagenbach, and the authorities took what they stolidly call a "serious" view of his literary project. When Baader was escorted into the reading room, Ulrike Meinhof was already waiting for him. Then four others, disguised by wigs, stormed into the library and fired their pistols and tear gas charges. There was an exchange of fire; one of the librarians was hit by a bullet from a liberator's Beretta and was critically wounded. Baader and his liberators all escaped, he and Ulrike making their getaway by jumping out of the Institute window and racing off in a stolen silver-grey Alfa Romeo. They left behind them several other wounded guards and librarians. The escapees still had time to pick up Frau Meinhof's children.

So began Ulrike's two-year adventure in the real and dead-to-earnest underground, dyeing her hair and changing her name, forging passports and stealing automobiles, breaking through roadblocks and scurrying to secret hide-outs, learning guerrilla tactics and robbing banks. Hardly a day went by without the police having to record some incident credibly attributed to the "Baader-Meinhof Gang" (although there were still many who angrily contended that it should properly be only called a "Group"). American installations were fire-bombed; 130 policemen were hospitalised after an attack (with thousands of bricks and rocks) on a court-house; judges' chambers were burned out; Molotov cocktails (affectionately called "Mollies") wrecked public offices; a very substantial treasury for terror was built up as bank after bank was effectively looted. The police were speechless in chagrin and near-desperation.

[11] The Röhl/Meinhof children, whom I have met, appear to be today relatively well-adjusted middle-class girls. But their father recalls the incident of the twins coming home from their Hamburg school with a cut and a gash. What had happened? "Well, we were in the school-yard, playing 'Baader-Meinhof Gang', and we hurt ourselves trying to make a quick getaway. . . ."

[12] I am grateful here for the frankness in their conversations with me to both Peter Rühmkorf and his wife Eva, both sometime comrades of Ulrike Meinhof in "the Movement." See also Rühmkorf's informative memoir, *Die Jahre die Ihr Kennt* (Rowohlt, Hamburg, 1972).

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German public opinion verged on a mild case of jitters and perhaps near-hysteria. Was the Republic ever in real physical danger? Hardly. But the spectacle of nice young idealistic kids ready to shed blood for a cause reminded too many Germans of another tragic generation of fanaticised violence.

The neurotic nervousness was only deepened when there seemed to be a vast army of liberal sympathisers who despised the cry for "law-and-order" and offered nothing but kind words for the harassed underdogs. How could there be enemies on the Left? The old distinction between democratic socialists and authoritarian Marxists, between meliorists and militants, between reform and revolution, had been blurred in the turbulent 1960s. A surprisingly high percentage of young Germans indicated in a poll that they "liked" the idealism and probably would help Baader or Meinhof to hide and get away if they were asked. What for troubled moderates were storm-troopers in the making, were for apologetic liberals only idealists in a hurry.

THE CAMPAIGN ON THE LEFT to "Save Ulrike Meinhof" grew in intensity and confused good will as everybody from Nobel Prize-winner Heinrich Böll to ex-husband Klaus Rainer Röhl, loyal to the mother of his children to the end, raised their voices. In *Konkret* there appeared a long open letter from Dr Renate Riemeck, her foster-mother, pleading with Ulrike to give herself up. She was in mortal danger and (evidently more important, as we shall see) was beginning to be an embarrassment to the whole Left in Germany. But wouldn't the police shoot her down like a mad dog if she attempted to surrender? Böll demanded an official Safe-Conduct for Ulrike to protect her from—as he put it, in the most grotesque analogy in post-War Germany—the vicious hysteria of 60 million Germans now hunting witches as they once hunted Jews.[13] The storm of dismay and indignation at this false and meaningless comparison almost completely destroyed Böll's reputation as a crusading liberal intellectual (until Solzhenitsyn, expelled by the KGB, saved it by taking refuge in Böll's house in Cologne). Röhl shrewdly avoided the moral afflatus and tried practical measures to get her out of the country. But Sweden (troubled enough by a population of GI Viet Nam deserters) and Cuba (doubtful of the Marxist purity of "infantile anarcho-terrorists") both turned her down. A secret appeal was made to one of Willy Brandt's ministers in Bonn to allow her to get over the West-Berlin border into Communist East Germany; but she was unwelcome there too, and even the old Röhl/Meinhof contacts in the secret Communist apparatus of the 1950s cold-shouldered any scheme to get Ulrike eastwards.

But then Röhl himself was in danger enough. He was visited one midnight by a group of inquisitors who might have come right out of the pages of Dostoevsky's *Possessed.* They put him on trial in his own living-room. All appeals for Ulrike to give herself up, or to be sneaked ignominiously across some border, were held to be counter-revolutionary. Hence Röhl was guilty, and he could only save himself by immediately retracting, confessing, apologising. He refused. They threatened him with "consequences"; and marched off. Röhl remained unworried except for a creeping suspicion that it might just have been better to call on the protection of the bourgeois police (but wouldn't that prove that he was a counter-revolutionary?). He also found himself entertaining the wayward thought that individual liberty is really a very important element which revolutionaries should not continually overlook. It was, as he says, "my first interrogation in a régime of terror. . . ." He wanted it to be his last, and he rushed into print with an article: "Anarchism Must be Made *Kaputt!*" He began to subscribe to the notion (made popular by a disillusioned Marxist philosopher, Jürgen Habermas) that "left Fascism" was the menace of the day.

ULRIKE MEINHOF'S two-year ordeal in the underground as "the most hunted woman" in German history and "Public Enemy No. 1" came to an end in Hanover on 15 June 1972. (Earlier June tip-offs had trapped most of the "hard core"—Baader in Frankfurt, and Ensslin shopping in an elegant Hamburg *boutique* with her revolver showing.) Ulrike's betrayal, if such it was, came from a comrade on the Left.

She had been using "safe houses" provided for her on the run by the extensive network of sympathisers and well-wishers. A 33-year-old left-wing teacher named Fritz Rodewald began, however, to have twinges of conscience. Upstairs in his apartment a number of mysterious guests

[13] The whole controversy has been documented—although regrettably with a few tendentious omissions—in *Heinrich Böll: Freies Geleit für Ulrike Meinhof, Ein Artikel und seine Folgen* (Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Cologne, 1972).

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had arrived, "warmly recommended by friends." Ulrike was quite convinced that she could not, by definition, have any enemies on the Left. But Rodewald had long felt that anarcho-terrorism was playing into the hands of the German Right, giving the reactionaries all the horrific arguments needed to defame the genuine New Left. Could he —should he—call the police? For a day and a sleepless night he wrestled with all the precepts of Marxist morality, tried to conquer all his personal fright of the "consequences", concluded that "the bloody drama just had to be ended bloodlessly", and finally dialled 110 from a phone-box to inform the Inspector in charge of the special Baader-Meinhof-*Kommando* which had been set up in every German city. By the time he ventured to come home the police had made their raid and the guests had been removed. Photographs were still being taken of the "swag": weapons, smuggled messages from comrades in prison, boxes of cartridges, false identity papers. In a bright red-leather cosmetics case there was a gift-wrapped package containing a 10-pound home-made bomb. The grateful police promised Rodewald the immediate payment of the official reward. The conscience-stricken Rodewald promised himself to donate it to the Ulrike Meinhof defence fund.

To judge from the snapshots taken that day in the Hanover police station Ulrike was almost unrecognisable. One detective explained: "No one here has touched her, but her entire face is puffed and swollen because like some enraged trapped animal she has been struggling and screaming and weeping for hours. . . ." But they did hold her firmly by her hair in order to take her photograph in the police line-up; and a doctor tried to take a peek at her Caesarean scars; and an X-ray assistant wanted to get a picture of the metal clip with which her Hamburg surgeon had ended his four-hour brain-tumour operation some ten years ago. German police are not these days especially bureaucratic but "an identity must be established properly." Ulrike resisted savagely. "You want to kill me!" she cried. "You're all next on the list! . . ." She refused to drink the possibly poisoned coffee or to smoke a suspect pack of cigarettes. She was frightened of being "brain-washed."

Protests began to be organised. Heinrich Böll, who had been afraid she would be done in and tried so hard to protect her with a "safe conduct", now began to suspect police brutality and even torture. The Left was indignant at the infringements of decent and humane due process of law. Ulrike's ex-husband raised his voice to warn against a Witch-Hunt, for Ulrike was still "more Joan of Arc than red-haired sorceress. . . ." Newspaper feature-writers began to muse about the pretty little girl who used to read Hölderlin and Gottfried Benn and yet loved to dance the boogie-woogie. Theologians pondered how she had ever come off the ecumenical path of her youthful enthusiasm to enrich the Protestant liturgy with elements of Catholicism. Her foster-mother, a prominent left-wing "peace fighter", almost regretted that her ward had ever "put aside her Proust and Kafka to mess about with politics. . . ."

WHAT HAS PUZZLED and startled the Germans (and even aroused a secret envy) has been the loyal solidarity of the anarcho-terrorist hard core. It has been of an astonishingly high order, perhaps comparable to the cohesiveness of medieval religious sects, and out of much the same sources of charismatic leadership and self-less devotion. Out of the hundreds who have over the recent years been involved in the various operational cells, only a handful have been known to defect and turn against their comrades; and of these only two or three on the periphery have gone so far as to collaborate with the police. One cannot but be struck by the fact that each of these was a non-ideological adventurer who felt increasingly out of sorts in an underground dominated by "arrogant and half-crazed bour-geois intellectuals." Karl Ruhland was one of the few workers the movement was able to attract; they treated him as a second-class revolutionary, omitted him from the highbrow theoretical discussions, and assigned him only the menial tasks of get-away-car maintenance. (His testi-mony is proving to be so confused and contra-dictory that it will hardly be of legal significance.) Rolf Mauer was also a young worker who parted with the Baader-Meinhof gang and agreed to be a state witness; he enjoyed for a while his underground role as a "proletarian gigolo" but he broke down under the burden of assignments mixing petty crime (which he could handle) and high politics (which bewildered him). Gerhard Müller, now 26 and facing separate trial in Hamburg, may testify (but "only against Baader" whom he feared and hated); he, too, felt brow-beaten and manipulated, secretly took vitamin pills when on hunger-strike and was reprimanded by his lawyers for not having lost enough weight,

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and finally wrote a letter to Jean-Paul Sartre to announce that he would have no more to do with "political maniacs like Baader and Ensslin." From the rest, however, there has been such a deafening dispiriting silence that the prosecuting attorneys and high police officials have been entertaining the idea of offering, in exchange for important "inside intelligence", not only a high reward but a valid passport under another name to freedom abroad. According to the Minister of Justice of Nordrhein-Westfalen, arguing for a new strategy of plea-bargaining, such secret organisations can only be "cracked from the inside when the strain of mutual suspicions leads to mistakes, mistrust and ultimate defection. . . ."[14]

NOT ALL THE GODS failed them. The one Baader-Meinhof spectacular success was the winning of Jean-Paul Sartre. No other 20th-century intellectual figure means so much to Europe's middle-class militants who need to add to their worship of Marx a more trendy reverence for a contemporary culture-hero. Sartre had fought Albert Camus' insidious influence on young minds and (after Camus' death in 1960) won the battle to discredit liberal non-Communist humanism; he had devised philosophical rationalisations for the plastic-bombers of Algiers; he had cheered on Fidel Castro and Che Guevara; he had blessed Cohn-Bendit and the Student Revolt of 1968; he had exposed American imperialism in Viet Nam; he hailed the emancipatory impulses of the Pop-&-Drug culture; he was prepared to go to jail for distributing Maoist newspapers on the streets of Paris (but de Gaulle had said, "One does not arrest Voltaire"); and for all his occasional criticisms of Communist and Soviet excesses (Budapest, Prague) he remained inflexibly loyal to the romantic principles of a Revolution which would change things utterly.

One of the cleverest of the Baader-Meinhof lawyers, Klaus Croissant (he was found guilty by the Stuttgart high court in April this year of judicial misdemeanours, and suspended from the case), went to Paris and persuaded the 69-year-old philosopher to make the journey to the Stuttgart-Stammheim prison-cell. Sartre agreed to take time off from his three-volume work on Gustave Flaubert and signalise his solidarity with fellow-revolutionaries. The liberal German judiciary—Sartre conceded, "it just couldn't happen in France"—allowed him an hour to talk privately with Andreas Baader. He had been a little afraid that the gang might only be a little band of *putschists* and not the titanic revolutionary spirits all of Western Europe was longing for; but in view of the fact (he was quick to confirm it) that they were being "tortured" and that they were, after all, martyr-figures of the Left International, he appealed to all and sundry to rally to their defence. He called for world-wide committee, and addressed himself especially to Heinrich Böll. At the press conference in Stuttgart's Hotel Zeppelin, Sartre (in a leather jacket)—using Daniel Cohn-Bendit (in a riot-frayed yellow sweater) as his interpreter —was his old eloquent irrepressible self.[15]

But the rallying-cry fell flat. I watched his nation-wide TV interview in a hotel lobby and most of the Germans walked out. One critic remarked bitterly, "Don't you think it's as awful as if Ezra Pound went to visit Rudolf Hess in his Spandau prison? . . ." Böll, this time, kept silent. Had the Baader-Meinhof gang succeeded in isolating themselves completely as they drove themselves into a frenzy? Was a martyrdom in limbo all that was left to them?

ONCE THEY HAD SHOWN THEMSELVES to be cunning manipulators of public opinion. I myself met Ulrike Meinhof briefly early on in her career and watched her in action; and she was already then an adept at agitational sleight-of-hand. They had all known how to use not only their widespread network of fellow-travellers and sympathisers but also the "corrupt bourgeois media." They were always smuggling out messages to their cadres to put the pressure on liberal theologians, progressive novelists, kindly philosophers. In one of the secret instructions to their followers they

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[14] See *Stern*, "Einer packt aus" (20 March 1975); *Der Spiegel*, "Ein armer Knacki zum Vorzeigen" (10 March 1975); and Dr Diether Posser, "Der Rechtsstaat und die Terroristen", in *Die Zeit* (14 March 1975).

On the whole psychology of defection, see my essays in ENCOUNTER: "The Recantation of Henry Redhead Yorke" (October 1973), and "The English Ideology" (December 1972/January 1973).

[15] On Sartre, see the chapter by François Bondy in *The New Left* (ed. Cranston, 1971), and the essays in ENCOUNTER by Maurice Cranston, "Sartre & Violence" (July 1967) and by Raymond Aron, "Sartre's Marxism" (June 1965). For current attitudes in the German press on the occasion of Sartre's visit to Baader's cell, see: Alfred Grosser, "Eine Stimme fur Sartre", *Die Zeit* (13 Dez. 1974); Jürgen Busche, "Der Bürger als Revolutionär", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (4 Dez. 1974); François Bondy, "Jean-Paul Sartres antipolitische Sendung", *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (11 Jan. 1975); and Jean Amery's perceptive essay, "Sartre: Grösse und Scheitern", in *Merkur* (Dez. 1974).

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had commanded: "Get on to Gollwitzer, to Bishop Scharf, to Ernst Bloch. Step on them. What's Böll doing? . . . " Well, last winter they neatly manoeuvered no less a figure than the Protestant Bishop of Berlin to call on Ulrike Meinhof in her cell for ostensibly pastoral purposes; and they managed to persuade one of the Bishop's assistants to smuggle yet another secret message out (via a young vicar, a graduate of the "Theology of Revolution" Academy, who had already served a sentence for harbouring Ulrike in the underground). And they could this spring still lure *Der Spiegel* to give them six newsmagazine pages by offering "exclusive interviews" (and the police had to make yet another midnight raid in the various prison cells to find out how it was done).

But to what avail? Nothing is so unloved in Germany today as a lost cause. Only a handful of tortuous dialecticians now remain who can convert minor sensations of the day into historic victories. Like their comrade and sometime millionaire patron, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, who blew himself up trying to plant a bomb on a Milan pylon—somehow, in the mystical optimism of the anarchist mind, putting out the city's lights for a minute or two would have struck a blow for the Revolution—they are all held in thrall by the prospect that even the smallest devotional deeds are stations along the way.

As I WRITE, the Baader-Meinhof hard core has just announced—collectively, as is their wont—that they are now all willing, effective immediately, to accept both food and water in their cells. The newly-threatened combination of a "hunger and thirst strike" could have been the last, and fatal, strategem in the struggle to defeat bourgeois justice. The decision on behalf of self-defence rather than self-destruction appeared to be the better part of revolutionary valour in view of the unwavering attitude of the prison authorities. The trial in the new Stuttgart-Stammheim prison is scheduled to begin on 21 May, and the Baader-Meinhof lawyers have suggested—in the first contact with simple reality in three paranoiac years—that the remaining time could be more usefully spent preparing their cases.

But it would be altogether out of character for Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader to be confining themselves merely to what they contemptuously hold to be "juridical cretinism." Now, in the light of the Peter Lorenz kidnapping, it would seem that they had only really decided to keep themselves in ready fitness for their imminent liberation. Unless, as Chancellor Hellmut Schmidt has worriedly hinted, the Lorenz guidelines for immediate and unconditional exchange are revised, they may well be free—if Lufthansa can find another open Arab air-strip on which to disembark them—by summertime. Another ransom-and-rescue operation is in the offing.[16] Revolutionaries are permitted to believe in miracles, so long as their own faithful comrades organise them and prove themselves to be the only true believers in the land prepared to take life-and-death risks.

After all, as is well known, *Therèse* sacrificed herself for the true word, and *Ahab* was magnificently pinioned to the White Whale. We have been here before.

[16] This was written before the spectacular ill-fated attempt on 24 April in Stockholm to seize German Embassy hostages. The German economic military attachés were killed by a subgang of six, the Embassy building was wrecked, and one of the terrorists committed suicide following the Bonn government's firm stand against the demand to free 26 Baader-Meinhof prisoners in what Chancellor Schmidt melodramatically called "the most serious challenge in the 26-year history of our democracy."

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Dan Davin

Five Windows Darken

Recollections of Joyce Cary

"Five windows light the caverned man."
WILLIAM BLAKE

JOYCE CARY was a name to my wife and me long before we ever met him. In that splendid summer of 1940 a month or so before the German breakthrough, my wife was staying at Rhodes House in Oxford with the Warden, C. K. Allen, and his wife Dorothy. They had insisted she be their guest until her baby was due and had arranged a bed for her in the maternity wing of the Radcliffe. I was a cadet at 168 OCTU in North Camp and came up to Rhodes House for weekends whenever I could get leave.

There was much talk on these occasions of a man named Cary. He and C. K. were both Air Raid Wardens and shared an A.R.P. post. He was a fascinating conversationalist, apparently, and was working on a novel with a woman as central character—no doubt *Herself Surprised.* He was finding it difficult, he told Dorothy, to write about a woman from the inside and Dorothy said he was always bombarding her with questions: how did she, as a woman, feel about this, that and the other.

He had published several novels already, it seemed, though I don't recall that the Allens had ever read any of them, and they certainly were not known to us, who counted ourselves well-read in contemporary fiction.

Our eldest daughter was born not long afterwards and the chances of war took us away from Oxford. I went off to the Middle East and the name of Joyce Cary dropped out of my mind until I came home on leave in 1943. My wife, now in Bristol, had just read *Herself Surprised* and was full of her discovery of a great new writer. Such enthusiasm is usually counter-productive and I began the novel with scepticism. Afterwards, I was heard to say to friends: "I have discovered a great new writer."

We went on to devour *To Be A Pilgrim* which had been published the year before. At the end of the war and 1945 we came, now a family of two daughters with a third due shortly, back to Oxford and my first civilian job. Meanwhile *The Horse's Mouth* had been published in 1944. So far as the rest of the world was concerned there was no longer any question of "discovery", for these three novels had made Cary famous. He was still living in Oxford, we gathered, but we were too diffident to seek him out. It was through Walter Allen this time, not C.K., that we first met him and his wife Trudy. For Cary and I were both then published by the same publisher and Walter not only published with him also but was his fiction reader.

My pemmican diary, fitfully kept, notes that the meeting took place on 30 August 1947, and that there was something "birdishly alert" about him. We discussed his early friendship with Middleton Murry when the two of them were undergraduates together. I asked him about Katherine Mansfield. He had not liked her, had thought her hard, selfish and a little sordid, then. Later, he realised he had been wrong. I suggested she must have lacked intellectual rigour or she would never have been taken in by Gurdjieff and Fontainebleau. He defended her: she was "looking for the answer." My diary notes also that he said, as a statement of simple fact and not from arrogance, "Of course, I don't read new novels much. I only read masterpieces."

Before long my wife met the Carys also and from time to time we met at parties or entertained one another to dinner. Our relations became friendly though they were our seniors by a quarter of a century. For most people in their late fifties as Cary was then, with a close and happy family life, four grown-up sons often coming back to visit them, a busy working routine and an already

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wide range of friends, it is not easy to find time and energy for new friendships, especially with people of another generation, a different past and different codes of living. But Joyce was always open to new experience, new people, always alive and interested, ready to give and ready to listen. He and Trudy were deeply attached to each other but it was an attachment that did not exclude, did not obtrude. Their house in Parks Road had a warmth in which a visitor could bask.

BY THE TIME I knew him he had developed a steady pattern of working which remained basically the same for the rest of his life in spite of the modifications imposed in later years by failing health. He was a light sleeper and usually awoke about four in the morning. He would then lie in bed thinking about new novels to write or about the book on which he was at the moment concentrating. He would scribble notes of any good points that struck him and, as he had a remarkable capacity for holding in his mind the general design of what he was doing, he could contemplate the whole thing as a painter might study an unfinished canvas, comparing it with the more or less mental picture complete in his mind to which it ought eventually, when finished, to approximate.

On "lucky days" he might get a little further sleep before getting up at 7.30. After breakfast he would deal with his correspondence and then go upstairs to his study in the attic, while his secretary typed the letters he had dictated or tried to decipher the more or less illegible manuscript he had written the day before.

Over his desk in the attic was a shelf of twelve compartments which he had designed for holding the files of the novel on which he was then at work. Each chapter had its own file. But before embarking on a narrative text at all he would write notes about his possible theme and the characters who were to enact it. Where place was important he would draw plans of the house or scene and all these would also have their special folders.

Partly because writing was his profession and to that extent his time was his own, partly because he was so naturally prolific, he might make any number of starts, trying to discover what line marched best with his basic theme, trying to isolate it. Once he had made up his mind he would attempt to get down on paper the crucial scene, wherever it might come in the ultimate novel—beginning, middle, or end—and in the finished book it might well occur at some point of the narrative remote from the one he first intended.

From there he would go on to write different parts of the book as he felt ready for them, or as one scene seized his imagination rather than another. He worked like a painter at whatever part of the canvas seemed to need development in relation to the rest and as the various parts built up he would be working on them all as it were simultaneously.

Sometimes he would find his theme or his plot dividing and sub-dividing, or one of his characters would insist on having the initiative and Joyce would indulge him while he obstinately developed beyond the role originally assigned to him. When this happened Joyce would follow the new path or the changed character for a certain distance before deciding whether this was the true way ahead or how far the new development could be contained within the broad framework that the basic theme and overall intention required. If the trail proved to be a false way out of the maze or the mutinous character grew out of control, Joyce would lop off the branch at its divergence from the main stem and put it away, perhaps to become the germ of some future novel or story, and would return to the main line.

So he worked, proliferating and yet all the time narrowing as the exigencies of the choices made compelled him to hew ever closer to the form. At the end the novel emerged, like a completed life, all possibility of further choice forgone. Yet before that could happen and when the process of discard was still incomplete he was usually left with a baggy monster which had to be savagely cut and put together again or "jointed up" as he called it, and tailored, whatever the wastage, to the most concise and swiftly moving form consistent with his original "intuition."

IN JANUARY 1948 I must have written something to him about *The Horse's Mouth* and *Mister Johnson.* For I find him replying on 2 February and thanking me for an appreciation he thought acute. "The Jimson-Johnson parallel is fundamental. Both are men of imagination and only such men can overcome the injustice of life. Jimson's fear of hating anybody because hatred will kill his art is of course beyond Johnson—he lives in the present (and in the present tense) like a child simply forgetting to hate. I'll look at that time sequence you mention. I am a free cutter and careless

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corrector. The cuts often break up my time schedule and I forget to change them—often a complex job.

"I am cutting now—and nearly off my head with the job. I enjoyed our evening. When the pressure relaxes a bit we'll have another." And he adds a postscript. "It was good of you to write—I know what trouble it is for a busy man."

The "injustice of life" is a characteristic phrase, corresponding to something which he felt profoundly. Elsewhere he recalls: "To us, from earliest childhood, in England or Ireland, the fundamental injustice of things, the cruelty of blind fate, were as natural as the air we breathed." But it was important both to realise the existence of that injustice and to accept it for oneself, even if one tried to ameliorate it for others. It was because of that injustice that the hatred which Gulley so much feared was possible at all, and Joyce himself felt the same need to avoid hating. Grief he could not avoid but he knew it also could be the enemy of his art and this was one ingredient of his willed stoicism in the troubles he had already endured and those, much worse, that were still to come.

Another note in my diary records a meeting on 12 April that year.

> "I notice certain stories and generalisations seem to recur from previous conversations; presumably the symbols and landmark summaries that have a special significance for him as he looks back. And the same metaphors occur and recur when he speaks of his own work: 'the lump', 'plastic', 'digging', 'vein', 'I don't know what I've got yet'. A man of very definite judgements who keeps his self-confidence immune by having little to do with contemporary critics and not exposing his sensibility to their acids."

I was right to pick on these words. Cary regarded his experience as a mine, a gross mass of rock, from which an ore had to be extracted and refined and then moulded into a particular shape. And he found the task so engrossing that he did not wish to be distracted, except when he himself was ready to leave the face, to get some air or because the problem could only be solved away from the actual workings. In such a state he would say, like Gulley Jimson, that he was "stuck" and he would go out for a rapid walk in the University Parks or in the Oxford streets, revolving his problem and drawing on the prodigious resources of his invention. Close friends could pass within feet of him and not be recognised though, when outwardly alert and not inwardly intent, he was a close observer of everything external. His concentration was so intense as to be almost trancelike. If you wanted him to become aware of your existence you had to stop and wave your arms and call his name before a smile of recognition and an outward light would appear upon his face.

At other times he would break shift because his stint was for the moment done, the problem solved or shelved, and he felt he needed company or social distraction. This happened more often after Trudy's death. While she was alive she had provided him with most of the society he needed emotionally. It was she, also, who protected him from the wrong sort of distraction, including the critics and their acids. As Gulley avoided hatred, and for the same reasons, Joyce avoided reading most of the reviews of his work and the exasperation of finding himself yet again wrongly understood. Trudy read them for him and screened out anything she thought he might find useful or interesting. Similarly, out of a desire not to be involved in sterile arguments and the quarrels of coteries, he avoided the literary world of London. There may, here, have been a residue of disillusionment from earlier days when, in 1912, returning to London after long absence in the Balkan War and eager for an audience, he had called on the Murrys and been told they were not at home, though the house above was loud with the noise of a literary party.

He did make an occasional sally, however, and once went to take tea with Ivy Compton Burnett, one of the few contemporary novelists whom he admired. They inquired of each other about their next books and Joyce launched into an explanation of how his current novel was not quite as he wanted but there seemed no way of doing any more to it. "I see," his hostess said, passing him the jam, "you mean it has gelled." Joyce was very pleased with the homely metaphor, so like one of his own, or of Sara Munday's, and adopted it thenceforward.

TRUDY, IT SOMETIMES seemed to us, knew more of Joyce's creative processes than he did himself. One evening someone was relating a scrape of Dylan Thomas's. He had been lent a flat, it was said, and being broke had gradually pawned everything until only the silver was left. He had set it out on the hall table and begun to clean it before taking it to pawn also. His hosts unexpectedly returned. "How thoughtful of you to have cleaned the silver for us. You shouldn't have bothered." Trudy shot a mischievous glance at Joyce and he looked uncomfortable. We all

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thought of Pinto in *A House of Children*, similarly overtaken; and of Gulley's outrageous adventures in the Beeders' flat. Whether Joyce had already heard this anecdote when he was writing his novel or whether the story itself is true hardly matters; for Joyce did not have to go direct to the actual, given his prodigious resources of invention.

That year, 1948, was the beginning of a time of troubles for Joyce and his family. Trudy became seriously ill. On 25 April, according to a diary of Joyce's, she told him she had a lump in her breast. Her doctor advised immediate action and Joyce went next day to see his brother-in-law Heneage Ogilvie, a distinguished surgeon at Guy's Hospital, and make arrangements. His entry for the following day reads:

> *1948 April 27.* Today when I came back from London and went to Trudy I still felt confused with this frightful and unexpected blow. As T. said "It's like a dream but now we know we're not going to wake up."
>
> What is strange is that I got no pleasure in walking through the Parks and looking at the new leaves on the trees, at the buttercups which are just opening in crowds among the bright green new grass. I used to think that looking at nature would always give me consolation in misery, but it did not do so today. The only thing that gave me comfort was simply a feeling for other people in misfortune and their need of love. I was made to feel, I suppose, for the first time the *absolute need* of love to make life possible, and the continuous everlasting presence of love in the world. And so the fearful bitterness of this danger to T. and all our memories together was mixed with the sense of something that can survive any loss, the power to love.

Trudy had her operation almost at once and when she was well enough to travel Joyce took her on holiday to Switzerland and the same hotels and places they had visited when they were young. His novels were having some success now in the United States and he was desperately anxious that she should live to enjoy the success with him, and the easier circumstances it promised to bring. But no cherishing, no reliving of the past when they were young and struggling and happy, could arrest the progress of the disease. When they came back to Oxford she was more and more confined to the house and in need of constant care. When I came back at the end of September from New Zealand where I had been talking to old soldiers about the battle of Crete I found that life at Parks Road, in spite of gallant efforts to keep a brave face, had a sombre undertone. We went there sometimes to dinner parties and they came now and then to us. Trudy was courageous and cheerful but after a time any formal entertaining became impossible for her.

Sometimes, in his distress, Joyce would feel forced to emerge and seek relief and distraction through his friends. Our children, the youngest then three and the oldest eight, became important to him. He listened to children with two levels of attention—one, the attention due to any other human being but especially to those young and needing security and love; and the other, the attention one might give to an oracle, to a being still young enough to have the guileless wisdom of innocence. Nothing delighted him more than the occasional saying which came out of their graver, more metaphysical moods. "How can God's face see everything if his face is always in the same place?" "I like pink and red and mauve and purple best but next year I hope to like green best too." "Where was I before I was born, Mummy?" "You were inside me." "But before that?" "You weren't anywhere, dear." "Where am I now?"

In February 1949 Gerald Wilde, the painter, came to live in Oxford where a friend of ours, Wendy Campbell Purdie, was giving him free board and lodging so as to help him to recover his health and to paint. About a month later a crowd of us came back home from a sherry party in Somerville in order to meet Joyce who had arranged to join us for coffee. It was getting late when suddenly Gerald appeared. Joyce had never met him and was sufficiently startled by Gerald to remember the meeting long afterwards. Gerald was "a figure strange even in that gathering place of poets and professors; of dreamers in all dimensions", he wrote in *Nimbus* in 1955.

Gerald, whose medium had never been words, was incoherent with excitement at meeting the creator of Gulley Jimson; for Gerald himself had long been nicknamed the Gulley Jimson of Soho, though the differences between him and Gulley were at least as marked as the resemblances, themselves undeniable and superficially the most obvious. He rushed forward now with the mixed intention of shaking Joyce's hand and embracing Enid Starkie. He managed neither but overturned a table of glasses and bottles with a tremendous crash and splashing.

Though he does not say so in his *Nimbus* article, the encounter may have been a shock for Joyce in another way. He would have seen quickly enough the sense in which Gerald was an incarnation of Gulley, and here was another case of reality imitating art. But it would not have needed that specific responsibility to bring out Joyce's unfailing kindness and sympathy for a fellow-artist in need of help. Before long he was buying

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pictures from him, some of the finest Gerald painted in what turned out to be a prolific period. He lent Gerald money also for paints but when he found that the money was being spent before it reached the paint shop in Broad Street he opened an account there so that Gerald could buy paint up to a given amount each week without actually having to handle money; for, as Gerald used to tell us proudly, Jung once told a psychoanalyst friend who had described Gerald to him that Gerald was a man for whom money was "poison."

Joyce's kindness was not always successful. On another evening he arranged for us to bring Julian McLaren Ross, whom he did not much like but wanted to help because he was a writer and a friend of ours, to Parks Road and meet a distinguished American editor, a man who had known William Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and all the other great men of the pre-war generation. Julian, however, quickly wrecked things by getting into a fierce argument with the American about dates of publication. My efforts to point out that they were both right, one meaning the dates of English publication and the other of American, went unheard. Embarrassed and bored, Joyce unobtrusively withdrew, unnoticed by the disputants. Eventually my wife found him in the basement, poring over old bound volumes of *Punch*.

A Fearful Joy was published in the autumn of 1949 and he wrote in reply to a letter of mine, on 13 November. "It was written and rewritten under so many difficulties that I could not know what I had done. Yes, *The Times* is not very profound but I don't know if I want to be dissected yet—possibly my entrails will neither please the anatomists nor delight the simple reader. And I was surprised and grateful that anyone knew so much about the books, a good deal more than I know myself. I shall try to find out who it was. Meanwhile, of course, I have been wrestling with a new book for the last seven months and trying to keep it together in spite of changes of place and mood dependent on the family crisis."

TRUDY'S ILLNESS was the family crisis in question. As I recall how total his devotion to her was and how deep his anxiety ever since April the year before, it seems to me all the more astonishing that he should have been able to bring off a novel of such exhilaration, verve and pace as *A Fearful Joy* and then turn to a new novel so important to him as *A Prisoner of Grace*.

Trudy was by now ill beyond hope of recovery, hanging on to life out of sheer love of living and out of courage. Towards the end of November my own wife left for New Zealand, promising the children and Joyce and me that she would be back when the leaves returned to the trees and the blossom came out. I had preoccupations of my own in consequence and saw less of Joyce than I should. I did not realise Trudy's death was so close. She died on 13 December but it was two days before I knew. Margaret Taylor rang to tell me. She had gone to Parks Road the day before with a sprig of heather for Trudy. "She left yesterday," Joyce said.

A few days later he rang me and asked me to supper in so natural a voice that I forgot Trudy was dead and so said nothing. Full of remorse I at once wrote him a note and when we met next evening we spoke of her, he calmer than I. She had prepared all the Christmas cards and ordered the tickets for the family visit to the pantomime—though not one for herself—so that the seasonal ritual so important for Joyce should not be broken. And so it happened. After the family gathering had dispersed, the festivities over, Joyce said, "It was a good Christmas."

Towards the end of March the leaves were beginning to show again and the blossom was on the flowering cherry and my wife returned. Joyce was now a lonely man, robbed of his emotional centre, hungry for the warmth of friendship and of family life. He began to drop in for tea with the children from time to time, sitting with one eye screwed up quizzically and listening to their sayings. He was delighted with the way one of my daughters in a metaphysical phase dealt with the darker side of eschatology. She refused to believe in hell. "The bad angels couldn't have made it and the good angels wouldn't have. And God wouldn't have either, even though he could have, because he is good."

The novels were now enjoying a great success in America and in Europe. Joyce was tempted to escape his loneliness and the familiar scenes of the grief he resolutely refused to show and seek out new countries and new people. He went to the United States in January 1951 and in the following summer he was off with some of his family to France. Later that year he was ill with something that was diagnosed as bursitis in the leg but appeared to pass off without leaving any traces. In the autumn of 1952 he was off again to Switzerland. In 1953 he was still restless and the death of his youngest son George in February, on the threshold of a brilliant scholarly career, was a

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severe blow, borne with the courage that by now we almost took for granted.

On 15 November he wrote to my wife with a present for my daughter Brigid's birthday—he was a punctilious and generous observer of birthdays—especially those of children. "The students here seem all gods—and I like young people, so keen and often so worried too. At Tulane I had seminars and talked to classes. I suppose I am an evangelist at bottom tho no church wd like my evangel. I long to see you all again, my dear, and love to Dan and Anna, and Delia, and Bridgy and the garden and the canal, the cats and the fish."

He was back in December, in plenty of time to prepare for the Christmas gathering when the house and its seven bedrooms would be full and ringing with the voices of his children and grandchildren. We had by now become part of his extended family and on Boxing Day we all went, with him as host, to the pantomime, taking up two rows. Afterwards we would go back to Parks Road, admire the Christmas tree, discuss the Christmas presents, watch the children play with their new toys, eat Christmas cake and mince pies, and drink tea or, for those with hangovers, something stronger. Nothing could induce him to be away at this time or at New Year when we all gathered again to drink his special punch and at midnight open the windows to hear the whistles and sirens announce another year's beginning and pledge one another's health in champagne. For Joyce in those times each new year was always going to be, not just as good as the one before, but better.

These were the years, too, when he was wrestling with his political trilogy, learning to write without Trudy as his amanuensis, best critic, mistress of his thoughts and heart, and wife. The books did not come so easily as they had done before her death and the theme was important to him, and complex in its working out. But when *A Prisoner of Grace* (1952), *Except the Lord* (1953) and *Not Honour More* (1955) had been published he was reasonably confident that he had done what he set out to do, expounded the politics of a nation and the politics of a family in terms of living characters. The Lord cannot build a house in politics, the message ran, without some interventions from the devil.

Every Wednesday he came to our house for tea, so as to enjoy the children's company, since by now our intimacy had established its own routines. He had become a kind of godfather to the children and he insisted on joining all birthday parties. I remember how often I came home from work at the end of the day to find him sitting happily in what I myself would have considered an intolerable clamour, missing nothing of the detail of their minute dramas and enjoying every shift in the kaleidoscope of childish emotions. And in some of the short stories he wrote afterwards I can still trace signs of the things he saw and heard among these children. And there is a passage in *Art and Reality* about a child's drawing of a swan which recalls a picture my daughter Delia drew for him of one of the swans from the canal at the bottom of our garden.

On Sunday evenings we gathered at Parks Road before dinner. All his intimate friends would try to be there, David and Rachel Cecil, Enid Starkie, Helen Gardner, Peter Ady, Audrey Beecham, Iris Murdoch, Wallace Robson and stray friends from the outer world like Robert Lusty or Heneage Ogilvie or William Empson.

He was the ideal host for people like these who were all in their various ways great talkers, for though loving to talk himself he was not a greedy talker. He was a skilful listener and gave his companions the feeling that they were talking well, and he was as warm and sympathetic in the tête-à-tête as he was unobtrusively able to orchestrate the larger groups. Indeed, he liked all the graces of living, though simple in himself, and was the best of hosts. Even when there were no guests, he always sat down to table with a certain formality behind which lay, not a formality of soul, but a feeling, something like a regular soldier's, that it was dangerous to relax too much, to let go: that traditions which had been built up, rituals which cemented family and society, should not be allowed lightly to dissolve. In this he resembled his own Mr Wilcher of *To Be A Pilgrim*, rather than the artist prototype, Gulley Jimson. He knew that life was impossible without change but he knew also that life inconsistently hungered for an ultimately impossible stability.

He dined always, as long as he was able, in the family dining-room, surrounded by family portraits from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—for he was pious of family history, though not ostentatious—and the silver candlesticks threw a gleam on the plate and the mahogany and the decanter of fine claret as he moved meditatively through his correct succession of courses. Yet he ate and drank sparingly, being a notably temperate man. Nothing in him was out of control. He was a soldier not far from

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his campaign, austere but without puritanism, often reminding me of Field Marshal Alexander, another Ulsterman whose father had died young, in his calm and in his good manners, as well as in the clarity of his eyes.

CARY WAS A MAN who thought and felt deeply on every subject. In politics he was definitely not a man of either right or left, though what he believed he believed with passion. He voted Liberal whenever he could and was a member of that party. But he was empirical. The way to get a thing done and whether it could be done modified his opinion of what ought to be done. On the question of censorship he was absolutely committed to freedom, what would nowadays be called permissive, vehemently so, in fact.

There were times when he seemed to speak as an Irishman but, after Ireland became a republic and perhaps before, he considered himself an Englishman whose family had happened to live in Ireland for three hundred years. He was very pro-English in the best sense. This sometimes made him seem inconsistent. He was violently anti-Munich in 1938, because he thought that it was bad for what was best in England, in this case shorthand for what was best in the world. Yet he was not anti-Suez, a point of disagreement with us. But we had to forgive him, because from his point of view Suez made a sort of sense: his misgivings were that it might fail, not that it was, as we passionately felt, wrong.

At the base of his love of England was the political freedom so deeply rooted there. For him, intellectually, freedom was the most important thing of all and injustice part of the price we have to pay for it. But almost as important as freedom was the need to do only what was expedient at a given moment. He did not believe that the end justified the means but that the end was itself shaped by the means.

His conversation was not necessarily literary; for the range of his interests was very wide and so was his experience. With me and others like me who had some knowledge of war he delighted to talk of battles, of courage and of fear and of men's behaviour under strain. He loved spell-binders and rogues and loved to hear anecdotes about eccentrics, confidence tricksters, politicians, adventurers, or stories about what children, those other beings capable of being themselves without self-consciousness, said and did, or high academic gossip with its low tricks, or tales from the outer political world. And after Trudy's death he liked to talk of the world of his young manhood, the world before 1914, and how beautiful its beautiful women were.

With critics like Helen Gardner or David Cecil the conversation was always likely to take a literary turn, if only because literature was an endless resource of examples. Joyce's admirations among novelists were few and firm and unaffected by fashion. The great European novelists of the nineteenth century were those he read and re-read, though he would sometimes say that Conrad was the only novelist who had influenced him. No writer's work, even the work of those he admired, was immune from his criticism but the criticism was stimulating because it was made from the point of view of a fellow-novelist, not that of a critic looking from the outside.

I think I valued his talk most when he was discussing the craft of writing as he knew it in his own work—if only I could remember more of what he said. I do remember his advice that you should always draw for yourself the plan and elevation of the house in which your characters lived; not that I have followed it. And how he used to say that if your novel was likely to be held up by a long but inescapable piece of dialogue you should get the characters into a train or a taxi, so that the reader would be given the illusion of movement even though the narrative itself was not in motion.

IN JUNE 1954 there was a visit from John and Mary Middleton Murry. Murry and Joyce had long been estranged and had not met since John was not at home to Joyce in 1912, but lately Murry had written out of the blue and said that he now realised that it was Joyce and not himself who had turned out to be the genius. No doubt this was an embarrassing thing for Joyce to deal with—Murry was always most embarrassing when he was being most scrupulous—but a visit to Oxford was arranged and Joyce gave a dinner party for the Murrys with Mary Ogilvie, the Cecils and ourselves as supporting guests. I had meant to ask Murry something about Katherine Mansfield but he looked to me so worn and scarred by life that I relented, thinking how often any questions I might ask must have been asked already and how tiresome it must be to be constantly interrogated about a phase of your life that was thirty and more years behind you and about someone who, however much you valued her at the time, you had not quite expected to be so much more interesting, dead and in retrospect, than your living, surviving, so much maturer and wiser self.

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The evening went off agreeably and the Murrys themselves were charming; but it was clear enough to Joyce and Murry and the rest of us that too much time and separate experience had divided them for too long and that the old warm friendship of their youth could no more be revived than youth itself. Time does not allow these things to return. And Joyce himself was tired, though the ravage showed less on him than on Murry. Perhaps Joyce was more than just tired. Enid Starkie saw him in Paris later that year and thought that he looked weary and that he seemed to be dragging one foot a little.

Not Honour More gave him a good deal of trouble. Because it was the last volume of his political trilogy it was important for the other two volumes and for the whole trilogy as well as important in itself. And for Jim Latter he was drawing, one surmises, a little on his own younger African self. While he was so deeply living in that character we noticed that his own everyday language took a coarser, more colloquial turn and four-letter words began to bob up in his vocabulary, something never noticeable in his speech before and vanishing from it again not long after the novel was finished. I have noticed something of the same sort happen when old soldiers meet and suddenly find themselves using a language that they have not used since they left the army. It was particularly striking at this time in Joyce, however, because he had never practised the freedom of language so characteristic of the "emancipated" artists of our time and was in this respect as in so many others very much of a gentleman in the sense which has now become old-fashioned.

Indeed, something of Jim Latter's impulsive restlessness seemed to invade his whole behaviour that year. In June and July he was off again, to West Germany and Berlin, on lecture tours; in October he was in Paris; and in November and December he was in Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

A letter to me from Helsinki dated 5 December opens in a way that did not seem like the Joyce we had known. For he described himself as lying in bed in his hotel, waiting for breakfast. "I always wait to be taken—it is the only way to conserve energy. Upsala nearly killed me—with sight-seeing." He found the Finns a lively and exciting people, perhaps because they were only 25 kilometres from the Russian frontier—but then I cannot recall a people whom he had not found lively and exciting. Less expected were his complaints about the remorseless sightseeing and then, at the end of the day, being put on a platform "to talk to 400 people with rather sketchy English about the diseases of the symbol."

But he soon laughed himself out of the querulous strain with a description of a dinner in Stockholm to which his Swedish publisher had invited all the prominent critics. The meal over, the publisher read aloud the reviews the critics had written of the first of Joyce's novels to be translated into Swedish. "This was embarrassing for us all—the expressions of some of the critics as they saw their turn coming and tried to remember how rude they had been—the cautious glances at me to see how I was taking it all—were pure film, by Orson Welles."

ON HIS RETURN from a holiday in Greece early in 1955, he did not feel well and saw his doctor. Something was seriously wrong with his leg now but various consultations throughout the spring and summer of 1955 produced no firm diagnosis or effective treatment. Not till November was there a certain verdict: he had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. He would steadily lose the use of his limbs and eventually the paralysis would extend to the rest of his body. At most he could live for four or five years. A span of two years or less was more probable.

He had already, after his return from Greece, buckled down at last to what he meant to be a religious trilogy, *The Captive and the Free*, a work he had been brooding over for years and which he intended to contain, expressed through characters and action, his maturest views about religion, the summa of his whole belief as an artist and a man. For years it had come up in his conversation as his most cherished and difficult project, something that was to be the capstone of his work. The title itself gnomically summed up his view of the condition of man; captive because of his physiology, his mortality, his need of others; in so far as he possessed imagination, the power to create his own life, transcend the conditions of his captivity, free. Some are wholly captive, I used to think as I listened to Joyce expound his theme, and none are wholly free. Joyce himself at that time seemed to be the nearest you could get to freedom.

On the first page of *The Horse's Mouth* Gulley Jimson says: "And I perceived that I hadn't time to waste on pleasure. A man of my age has to get on with the job." This was now Joyce's situation. In December 1955, if he lived so long, he would be sixty-seven. And his disability threatened to close on him very fast. The novel clamoured to be

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written. "I shall die if I don't finish this book," he said to my wife, and there was grimness in the jest. Fortunately, he acquired at last that autumn a really good secretary, Edith Millen, who had been trained as a nurse; and a devoted housekeeper, Mrs Lightburne. For now he had taken stock of his remaining time and strength and reorganised his life, like a commander preparing for a long series of withdrawals under enemy pressure.

He ceased working in the top attic as the stairs became impossible for him and began to use Trudy's old private sitting-room on the ground floor as his study. He had metal grips fitted into the walls of the passages at various strategic points and with their aid and that of a stick could for a time get about without other help. When the disease attacked his hands he contrived a sling with an elastic band which could take the weight of his wrist and leave him free to write.

He was working that year, 1955, on the Clark Lectures for Cambridge University in which he hoped to bring together—did eventually bring together—and expound in theoretical form the views about art and life which he had so stubbornly pondered for so many years and which his novels presented in fictional form. And as time went on, no longer stretching infinitely in front of him, these lectures became for him another summa, parallel with and eventually competing for time with *The Captive and the Free*.

And then there were the illustrations he was supposed to do for a special printing on Herbert Davis's hand-press at Bodley of "The Old Strife at Plant's." This was a chapter which had been written for *The Horse's Mouth* but which Joyce had excluded from the final version of the novel because it was in some way disproportionate. It had been a particular favourite of Trudy's and she had preserved it from destruction. Now he was drawing, his hand supported by the sling, sketches of Gulley in pursuit of his Pink, and chuckling fondly as he recalled the time of the original writing and memories of Trudy came vividly back to him. When the time came for the colours to be filled in, however, he could not manage them and this was done, under his careful supervision, by Herbert Davis's daughter and my daughter Anna. The sketches of Gulley have a certain look of Gerald Wilde about them, and of Dylan Thomas.

There was also the special limited edition of *The Horse's Mouth* to be published by Rainbird. For this he was able to do only a self-portrait, drawing it direct on to the zinc plate with almost the last strength of his hand. It is a superb likeness of a suffering, wise and courageous head, the head of a man alert to confront his last, indeed his only, enemy. When one of my daughters said to him, "It's very like you, Joycie, but why do you look so grim?" he answered gaily, "It's because I was looking in a mirror, my dear." He was indeed looking in a mirror and saw plainly but with courage the death in his own face. And it was about this time that my wife said to him, "I do think you are behaving very bravely about all this, Joyce." "I don't think it's really brave," he said. "There are situations where there is only one thing to do. And this is one of them. I have no choice."

The time came when he had to take to a wheelchair. In fact he had been using one at intervals since the earlier months of the year for longer excursions. But he could not always be persuaded to go out in it. Once in the spring my wife said to him, "It's a lovely spring day, Joyce. Let me take you to the Parks." But he shook his head. "I have sixty springs in my head."

THERE WAS ONE MORE serious interruption to his work on the novel and the Clark Lectures, a stay in Stoke Mandeville Hospital where treatment with a new drug administered by intravenous drip seemed worth trying. We visited him whenever we could and always found him cheerful, absorbed in the life of the hospital and ceaselessly thinking about his work, rallying the company, prepared to entertain hopes of a cure, even if only to encourage his friends, but fundamentally expecting nothing.

The treatment failed and he came home again. His speech was slurred now and his light voice lighter. There was nothing for it but for him to continue to battle against the implacable disease and try to use what time remained. It was not difficult for him to chart the enemy's progress. He could feel a "flicker" in the nerve of each muscle as it was attacked and the paralysis edged its way forward. That flicker continued night and day, as sleepless as time. One by one the muscles of his limbs were defeated and with the defeat of each outpost, he was deprived of one more capacity. The time came when he could not get in or out of bed or take a bath without help. A canvas sling on a metal crane was designed by John Payne, a friend of Audrey Beecham's, to overcome the difficulty and he wrote to Brigid in September 1956—we were staying at Barmoor Castle in Northumberland where he had once spent a summer holiday with us—and told her how successful the crane was and how Edith could now put him to bed with its aid.

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One could not fail to read the physical signs, however brightly the old spirit still burnt in the dying lamp. My diary for 13 October reads: "He can scarcely use a pen at all now. Dictates, but the voice is beginning to go. A desperate, slow tragedy. The development of this will overcast our whole winter and I fear he cannot live much beyond that."

He was not well enough, of course, to deliver the first of the Clark Lectures on 19 October or to go and hear his nephew Robert Ogilvie do it for him. Earlier in the month he had written to me in the Scillies and complained of the time they were costing him. "It is very frustrating to have to break off my novel over and over again for these odd jobs, but, thank goodness, the thing is nearly done now." And, even if he was not well enough for the lecture, he was sufficiently consoled by the reports of friends who were able to get to Cambridge. My diary notes about this time that he was "very frail but more cheerful and working on his novel again." And on one particularly successful day he said to my wife, "The novel's in the bag."

He was in bed all the time now and working under heartbreakingly difficult conditions. He now had a bed-desk invented by himself and made for him by his next-door neighbour, a magistrate whom Joyce called "the Judge." A roll of blank paper ran underneath which led across the desk to another spool on which the used paper was wound. At first, he still had enough movement in his right hand to be able to push the paper forward as it was used. When this, too, became impossible his son Tristram devised an electrical switch by which Joyce dropped his wrist on a button and the paper moved forward automatically. The hand itself was supported by a sling and the pen or pencil was fastened to the fingers. I used to marvel that a man so close to death did not despair of art, that he could still keep at bay that sense of "nada" which overcomes so many writers even when death is still distant.

We all feared by now that he would not live till Christmas, the one that was bound to be his last. But we underrated his stubborn spirit and the force over him that was exercised by a family occasion to which he could look forward. Part of his abundant life had been his power to enjoy all of it—the past which enriched the quieter reveries of the present and which in his case seemed to be unburdened by guilt and self-reproach or any sense of failure; and the future which was always immunised for him by hope and which even now could still offer joy if by an effort of will he contracted hope to the shorter views Sydney Smith long ago recommended, views that enabled him to see and feel the family round him at least once more. So Christmas and the family came and the New Year which he would not see again; and his presence in the adjoining room, though we were all filled with sorrow and foreboding, still radiated courage and cheerfulness and made the ritual celebrations a success against the odds, something not macabre.

Once only did he break down. His grandson Lucius, at Joyce's request, sang "O Little Town of Bethlehem", standing in the open doorway of the bedroom so as to be able to hear the piano. When it was over, Joyce burst into tears. The injustice of life and the knowledge of what he was losing had overcome him.

By January he knew he would not live long enough to carry through the task of revising and "jointing up" the novel—which he had long since decided must be compressed into a single volume, not three—and also revise the Clark Lectures for publication, a task which he regarded as a duty. He accepted that he would not finish *The Captive and the Free* and would indeed die. Even so, he would not give in but, having finished the Clark Lectures, began to write short stories, things he knew he could finish because they were short. It was typical of him that these last stories should be full of an ironical gaiety.

IN THE MIDDLE of March he finished polishing his last short story. Thereafter even he could write no longer and he and we were waiting for the end. He died on 29 March 1957.

Joyce would have smiled sadly to himself, thinking of Mr Wilcher and the Adams salon in Tolbrook Manor and its fate, if he could have seen what was to happen to the house in Parks Road, still standing but converted to a scientific annexe and dominated and overlooked by huge new scientific buildings. And his friends cannot pass it without remembering his courage and generosity and the eagerness with which he recognised such ironies of change even while he grieved over them. For he accepted that change was the stuff of life, its condition, and that grief is the price of happiness just as the last change is the price of living. His sorrows were never for himself; and if the writer was reluctant to die so long as life and change so abundantly clamoured to be given shape in art, the man died with the courage and consideration for others which were main strands in his whole life.

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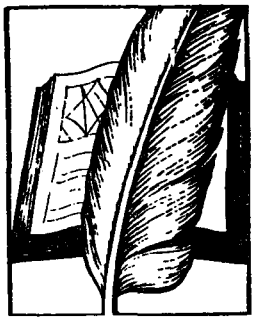

Column

BY THE TIME this column appears in ENCOUNTER I shall be in the Antipodes, about as far away from this country as one can reach without undue hardship or exertion. I have no doubt that from there our little local difficulties will look rather different from what they do to our parochial eyes, and I must confess that I rather hope they will, because as seen from here our affairs seem to present a spectacle of quite indescribable confusion and disarray. Will I return, I wonder, feeling, as so many other people in the world already do, that this is a matter of no great concern to anyone except ourselves, and merely marks yet another stage in our irresistible decline, which many people may regret but can do no more to avert than we can ourselves? Or will the prospect of other people's troubles (for the world is in general a troubled place at the moment) help to put our own in better proportion and reinforce the lesson, which we are so slow to learn, that we really have not much choice except to sink or swim together?

But this is already to anticipate what one will find elsewhere, in another continent and another hemisphere, both new to me and therefore all the more eagerly looked forward to. At the moment all I can say is that I am glad to be going and for a time avert my eyes from our domestic affairs which, as it seems to me, have never in my lifetime, not even during the great depression of the 1930s, or during the most critical years of World War II, presented quite so discouraging an aspect. The problems which face us are so many, so urgent, and at the same time so inextricably intertwined, that one may reasonably feel they can only be solved by some effort of national will and energy of the kind which the people of Britain displayed after the collapse of France in 1940 when, for the last time perhaps, they showed themselves willing and able to save themselves by their exertions and the world by their example. But alas! the truth is that, difficult as our problems are, they are multiplied a hundredfold precisely because such a will is so conspicuously missing.

MOREOVER, EVEN IF there were such a will, it would be effectively debarred from finding a way, because at present the country's affairs are in the hands of a man, Mr Harold Wilson, whose eyes are bent primarily on the purpose of maintaining the unity of his own political party, on which the perpetuation of his own power depends, and in order to achieve that purpose is willing to make any sacrifice of the national interest which is demanded of him. In order to do so, he has already plunged this country into a debate in which the great majority of its people are profoundly uninterested, for the very good reason that they have not the slightest idea what it is about, and in consequence has opened the doors to possibilities which no one can at present calculate with any degree of confidence. Indeed, not even he can; but Mr Wilson is different from most of us, because such a prospect fills him, not with dismay, but with a kind of euphoria.

Sometimes one thinks of Mr Wilson as of some conjuror or acrobat who continually invents new tricks which become progressively more difficult to perform and who will never be satisfied until at length he devises an act of such breathtaking virtuosity that it overtaxes even his own skill; for he has no competitor except himself. And when if ever the moment comes for him to fail, one supposes that Mr Wilson will retire satisfied to whatever Oxford common-room he has picked on as his next victim, careless of the havoc he has created around him, and happy in the thought that no politician in this century has ever given quite so dazzling a performance as he has.

THERE ARE THOSE who believe, or hope, that such a moment is already near. The press and the media, for whom Mr Wilson has the fascination of a snake for a rabbit, search for every sign of growing strain and fissure in the ramshackle structure which Mr Wilson calls his Government. LEFT THIRSTS FOR REVENGE! cries the *Evening Standard* as I pass, after Mr Wilson's dismissal of Mr Eric Heffer, who was not up to the complexities of the game in which Mr Wilson is at the moment engaged. But Mr Wilson, I feel sure, is well aware that the wider the split between the opposing factions of his party, the more indispensable he is as the only politician with the agility and versatility to bridge it. The Left may indeed thirst for revenge, but one has the feeling that if ever the knife strikes it will fall on empty air, and by some Batman feat of levitation Mr Wilson will be found in some quite different place from where he was expected to be.

As for Mr Wilson's Conservative opponents, they are even more bemused (as they obediently supply him with the majorities he needs) than his critics within his own party. What satisfaction it must give him, for instance, to find Mr Peregrine Worsthorne advising pro-European Conservatives to register a negative vote in the forthcoming Common Market referendum, as the only means of getting rid of him, forgetting perhaps that, having got rid of him by such means, it will be left to themselves to face the consequences.

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With such enemies, a politician has no need of friends, and by now it is a somewhat lonely eminence which Mr Wilson occupies. He makes one think of those great artists, like Henry James or James Joyce, whose later works develop such a density of texture, such complexities of allusion and reference, that there is practically nobody left to understand or appreciate them, much less their author. Such a position, isolated and solitary as it is, has its rewards, in the recognition and admiration of what Stendhal called *the happy few*; but it also has its penalties. In Mr Wilson's case, so intense a concentration on political form at the expense of political content threatens in the end to leave him with no assets except his own virtuosity. He reminds one of Tennyson saying in his old age; "I am the greatest master of English who ever lived—and I have nothing to say."

FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW, of whether the Old Master can bring it off again, I shall almost regret being away while the nation makes up its mind whether, in the forthcoming referendum, to give its wholehearted assent or dissent to Britain's continued membership of the European Economic Community ("Common Market", I hasten to add, in case I am accused of bias). But there will be something else to come back to; for when at length the verdict will have been given, whether positive or negative, it will once again be possible to discern, through the fog with which Mr Wilson has surrounded them, the real shape and form of the problems with which the country is confronted.

Since Mr Wilson initiated his renegotiation of the terms of Britain's adherence to the Treaty of Rome, politics have been in a condition of suspended animation, disturbed only by the internecine struggles by which both the Labour and the Conservative parties have been consumed. It is a condition in which Mr Wilson has been able to float, manoeuvre, and perform aerial acrobatics at his ease, and Mr Heath has fallen flat on his face. But it afforded no opportunity for genuine political conflict, for how could anyone take up fixed positions until they knew what kind of battlefield they were to fight on? Once the verdict has been given, it should be possible to say: *Let Battle Commence*. By then, one might hope, the major political parties will have disposed of some of their internal preoccupations; Mrs Thatcher, as a political leader, will have lost some of the charms of novelty and femininity and become more of an old political war-horse; the Labour Party will have had to decide whether to continue as a single party or to disintegrate into its warring factions; and the country, after its introverted debate about the Market, will, like some neurotic reluctantly leaving the psychiatrist's couch, have to turn its face to the world.

PERHAPS THIS IS TO TAKE an optimistic view, in the sense that it assumes that by then the political system will be in a condition to come to grips with the country's real problems, to which the debate about the Market is largely irrelevant. It is possible to take a more pessimistic view; but whichever proves to be right, after the referendum it will not be possible to postpone much longer decisions which will vitally affect the country's future. Considered in detail, the list of such decisions is an appallingly long one, affecting almost every aspect of the people of this country. But perhaps in the end it can be reduced to the overriding questions of how to control inflation and the even more fundamental question which Mr Heath so tactlessly asked at the last two elections: *Who is to govern?*

So far as I can guess, the country, if one can still speak of the country as a single political entity, has not yet made up its mind about either of these questions. Perhaps the debate about the Market may help it to make up its mind, though there is no real reason why it should, because however it is decided, the other questions will remain unresolved. Whether we are in or out of the Market, they will refuse to go away. The most that can be said is that, out of the Market, we shall find them even harder to face than if we are in it. In the meantime, the debate about the Market remains a distraction, invented by Mr Wilson to preserve the unity of the Labour Party and his own position as its leader and Prime Minister.

I AM GLAD that *The Times* took the opportunity of reprinting the introduction which Lionel Trilling has written for his new edition of *The Middle of the Journey*.[1]

I hope it will attract new readers to the novel, and at the same time do something to preserve the memory of a man who in his lifetime was the subject of great scandal and opprobrium, but also helped to destroy some of the political illusions by which Western intellectuals were infected before and after World War II.

The Middle of the Journey was first published in 1948. As Professor Trilling tells us, it was designed as a work of fiction, but also had a specific historical purpose: "to draw out some of the moral and intellectual implications of the powerful attraction to Communism felt by a considerable part of the American intellectual

[1] *The Middle of the Journey*. By LIONEL TRILLING. With a new introduction by the Author. Secker & Warburg, £3.75.

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class during the Thirties and the Forties." To my mind, it succeeded in this purpose admirably; yet I am afraid it did not usually achieve the therapeutic effect which Professor Trilling presumably aimed at. One has only to read, for instance, the pages of the *New York Review of Books* today to realise that, for many American intellectuals the "powerful attraction" still persists, though now it displays itself in new forms. What remains is a profound disillusion with their own political institutions, together with a belief that somewhere, in the East, in Cuba, in North Viet Nam, in Chile, a new star has arisen which will lead them to the New Jerusalem.

In his novel, Professor Trilling aimed at producing a work of the imagination; but he also embodied in it, in the person of one of his characters, Gifford Maxim, "a considerable amount of recollected observation of a person with whom I had long been acquainted; a salient fact about him was that at one period of his life he had pledged himself to Communism and had then bitterly repudiated his allegiance. He might therefore be thought of as having moved for a certain time in the ambiance of history even though he could scarcely be called a historical figure; for that he was clearly not of sufficient consequence."

By a strange combination of circumstances, however, a few months after the original publication of *The Middle of the Journey* there occurred an event, the trial of Alger Hiss, which bestowed on the original of Gifford Maxim all (and rather more than) the historical consequence that most people would like to achieve. For Trilling's acquaintance was, of course, no other than Whittaker Chambers, who as long ago as 1939 had given to Adolph Berle, then Assistant Secretary of State, detailed information of a Communist espionage organisation, of which he himself (together, he alleged, with Hiss and other highly placed government servants) had been a member. Nearly ten years elapsed before investigations of those allegations led to Alger Hiss's trial and conviction for perjury.

It is no exaggeration to say that the trial of Alger Hiss was the most important trial to take place in the West since the Dreyfus case, and its repercussions in the United States were as profound as those of the great Affair itself in France. It polarised American public opinion in a way that has never since been bridged and in this sense it could be said that its effects were even greater than those of Watergate.

What added to and heightened the drama of the Hiss case were elements of the bizarre and incredible which crept into it; but among these elements nothing was possibly more bizarre than the character of Whittaker Chambers himself. For one thing, he provided the almost perfect foil to the urbane, brilliantly successful, Establishment figure of Alger Hiss. Indeed, the extraordinary contrast between the two characters was the very heart of the drama—for Hiss, by any conventional standards, was a gentleman, whose word anyone would accept without question; whereas Chambers was a megalomaniac *fantaisiste*, who so loved to fabricate mysteries that many have not hesitated to describe him as a pathological liar. And yet, incredibly, as the case wore on, it became more and more apparent that it was Hiss who was the liar and Chambers who was a witness of truth. I should add, because it is an important aspect of the case, and its after-effects, that there are many people alive, including Hiss himself, who would still deny the truth of this statement.

WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, then, was the man whom Trilling, all unaware of the blaze of publicity which was shortly to surround him, chose as the model for his lapsed Communist, Gifford Maxim. In his introduction he tells us something of the man he had known; of his almost repulsive physical appearance, "short of stature and very broad, with heavy arms and massive thighs", with "a sizeable outcrop of belly" and a narrow mouth which, until he undertook restorative dentistry, "never failed to shock by reason of the dental ruin it disclosed, a devastation of empty sockets and blackened stumps"; of his "commitment to radical politics", which "was meant to be definitive of his whole moral being"; of his "histrionism, which seemed unremitting"; of his "near approach to becoming a burlesque of the underground revolutionary."

It is not an attractive portrait. Yet somehow Chambers imposes himself on one's imagination, just as he imposed himself on Lionel Trilling's, walking into his novel, as he says, almost unasked; or as he imposed himself, in a different way, on the jury which finally ended by taking his word against Alger Hiss's. Perhaps the secret lies in his gift for "total moral commitment", demonstrated first in his devotion to Communism, and later in his opposition to it.

The literary merits of *The Middle of the Journey* are in themselves enough to recommend it to the reader; but, in the portrait which the novel, together with this introduction, gives of Whittaker Chambers, it constitutes also a kind of artist's note on the margin of history, which today gives it an added interest. I hope this new edition will be given the same cordial reception which, on its original publication, Professor Trilling tells us it received in England, though not, significantly enough, in the United States.

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FILM

Narcissi Round the Pool

By John Weightman

IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL, simply from seeing Jack Hazan's film about David Hockney, *A Bigger Splash*, and without knowing the people concerned and the milieu, what exactly it was meant to be. An artier *Flesh*? Certainly I doubt if it would have been made in this form, if the Warhol/Morrissey team had not already given us glimpses of the home-life of their particular weirdies in *Flesh*, *Trash* and *Heat*. Warhol, it would seem, is an artist with a whole stableful of human freaks; Hockney is not such a connoisseur of the abnormal, but he appears to live in a very special group, so that the old academic subject: "The artist in his studio, surrounded by friends" becomes something like an illustration to Krafft-Ebing. Or was it intended as a genuine documentary about the way a painter works, centred on a crisis in his career? If so, it is surprising that there should be little or no discussion of the artistic process and so much apparently irrelevant material: Peter Schlesinger cycling pointlessly down a street, Ossie Clark and Mo McDermott exchanging *badinage* about whether or not braces are fashionable, and various shots of Celia Birtwell, decorative and imperturbable, a calm female principle at the heart of androgynous flutter. Or, starting from reality, did Hazan want to compose a film that would be artistic in its own right? Some sequences appear to have an almost allegorical quality; young men frolic in Arcadian innocence, or Peter Schlesinger, a beautiful naked zombie, wanders round a garden in California like an anonymous body looking for its soul.

It may well be that the film is just an unsatisfactory muddle of various things and should be dismissed as a meretricious product exploiting the twin themes of modishness and homosexuality. Perhaps it is not very different from one of those TV "Life-Style" programmes which show, for instance, Mary Quant being terribly simple as she picnics in the grounds of her country mansion or plays bowls with the peasants in her unspoilt village in the South of France. David Hockney is similarly a fashionable figure and a great commercial success and therefore the camera follows him around with its devoted, one-eyed stare and does not distinguish between important moments and less important, precisely because the definition of a charismatic personality, a star, is that all things pertaining to him or her are felt to be significant. We do not actually see Mr Hockney pee-ing, star-like, in his no doubt latest-model lavatory, but we watch him take a long and meditative douche in his exquisite, blue-tiled shower and cuddle up on a sofa with a new boy-friend. We also see his ex-boy-friend, Peter, in active copulation with a third, unidentified young man. What has this to do with art, or art-history? one might ask. If we had a videotape of Turner drinking his daily half-pint of sherry at the Athenaeum or of Mrs Ruskin in bed with Millais, would we be any the wiser?

However, whereas I only felt aggrieved at the Mary Quant programme, *A Bigger Splash* has gone on echoing in my mind. The different elements in it seem to be trying to piece themselves together. Perhaps, after all, it is a genuine statement, or at least on the way to being one.

ALTHOUGH THE CHRONOLOGY of events is deliberately confused, a narrative summary can be worked out. Hockney had an affair with a young Jewish American, Peter Schlesinger, of whom he made innumerable photographs, drawings and paintings. This young man has only an average handsome face but an exceptionally well-proportioned body, and this may be why, in the various representations of him we glimpse in the course of the film, the body is dominant, while the face is expressionless and often turned away. The affair broke down through Schlesinger leaving Hockney, and for several months the painter struggled without success to complete a final picture of the young man beside a swimming-pool. He couldn't work and became restless, and there are several scenes in which he wonders where he should go: France, Italy, California, etc. The difficulty for someone

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with no family ties and an adequate supply of money is that there is no reason why he should be in any one place rather than another. Existentialist freedom acquires the dimension of ubiquity (*cf.* the diary of another liberated homosexual, André Gide). Eventually, after dodging round between Geneva, London and New York, Hockney appears to have found another clean-limbed young American, brimming over with hero-worship. The pool picture is finished from photographs of Schlesinger, who then apparently returns to California. His image has been exorcised, because Hockney announces with a smile to his new boy-friend that he will probably sell all his drawings of Schlesinger.

This is a modernist film, in that everything is left cool and enigmatic, as indeed in a Hockney painting. We are not told what the relationship between Hockney and Schlesinger was like, nor why it broke up. Hockney may be restless, but he is far from broken-hearted. The real problem seems to be that he cannot get on with his work, but again the difficulty is not explicitly defined. We see him destroying one canvas and working on another, but learn nothing about what it is that is holding him up. He never talks about art, and it may be that he himself has no idea what is going on inside him when he transposes the Bohemian blur of everyday living into his serene, yet slightly disquieting, patterns. What is clear is that his creative block unsettles the little court of people around him, including two highly comic characters: Mo McDermott, who apparently functions as dogsbody and factotum, when he is not at home making braces and artificial flowers with his own mute and relatively inglorious boy-friend (one wonders if Hazan has wittily built up McDermott as a foil to Hockney, or whether he was a bonus provided by reality); and Kasmin, the owner of the gallery, who reproaches Hockney with spending six months on this one canvas of Peter by the pool, while a host of customers are waiting to buy as yet unpainted works. "Never mind the quality", Kasmin seems to be saying, "count your units of production, for all our sakes!" If this delicious scene is true, Hockney shows that he has the staunch moral egotism of the convinced artist, whose only law is his aesthetic sensibility and who will not be hurried. I am not qualified to have an opinion about his talent, but he himself is obviously a "natural", a rock-like presence in an area where values are so difficult to be sure of and verbal exchanges quite footling. The film redounds to his credit by indicating that he is ruthless in respecting nothing but his own artistic instinct. But I suppose his native confidence is reinforced by the economic strength of being able to rattle off a drawing to pay any bill, and the sentimental strength of having no firm attachments, or perhaps no vital attachments at all.

THIS LEADS BACK TO THE QUESTION of what, if anything, the film is really about. It is not a systematic exploration of Hockney's art, nor a touching account of love and the artist, since Hockney frequently wears a broad grin and is capable of a kind of Yorkshire hill-billy irony, even when making a pass at the new young man. Nor, again, is it just a *cinéma-vérité* ramble through the Chelsea art-world. What then? If I were one of those bold Parisian critics who jump straight to structuralist-thematic conclusions, I think I would say that the unifying subject is narcissism and that *la thématique de l'eau* (swimming-pools, showers, sheet-glass like the walls of aquaria) and *la thématique des fleurs* ("petal" as a vocative, floral dress designs and artificial blooms) are not accidentally present. These are narcissistic flower-people, each gazing primarily at himself, so that they do not mind if the camera-eye is introduced into their midst. A sense of shame is totally missing. Hockney even has closed-circuit T.V. in his bedroom, with the camera trained on the bed, as if his most intimate moments needed reflection to the self. In the erotic scene, the two young men have identical beautiful bodies and (surprise!) grapple, not as one had always thought *more canino*, but face to face, as if Narcissus had fallen flat on to his own image and were making love to himself. When Schlesinger is alone, he dances naked to rock-music, in a sort of dream of self. In some of the typical Hockney portraits, the sitters look outwards with a curiously frozen stare, and it is impossible to catch their eye because they seem to be already gazing at themselves in some invisible mirror. The film-camera follows Ossie Clark to the Tate Gallery, where he goes to look at his own portrait by Hockney; one can imagine him later watching the film of himself looking at his portrait in which he seems to be entranced by his own invisible reflection. . . . As Paul Valéry puts it, in *Fragments du Narcisse*.

L'âme, l'âme aux yeux noirs, touche aux ténèbres mêmes,
Elle se fait immense et ne rencontre rien . . .
Entre la mort et soi, quel regard est le sien!

Soul, darkness, and death. Perhaps these terms sound too portentous to be quoted in connection with a film about self-confessed "fashion-freaks", and which is full of Hockney's bright, clean, sunlit pictures. But one can ask two additional questions: what does the enigmatic quality in the Hockney pictures relate to? and where did Hazan's sympathies, in making the film, really lie?

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MY IMPRESSION, as an uninstructed outsider, is that Hockney simplifies, clarifies, prettifies, establishes control, freezes everything into a beautiful Arcadian moment. Perhaps some of the pictures come near to being pure decoration or images of gracious living, distinguished only by the peculiar blending of colours and forms dictated by Hockney's temperament. Although he makes great use of photographs and—surprisingly enough—even resorts to cut-outs of blow-ups to get the outlines of his figures, we are given proof of the fact that he does not simply paint from "life." For instance, he will change the colour of an actual sofa to make it suit the harmony of the picture, just as Corot is reported to have moved the trees round in his landscapes.

I suppose that, like many if not all artists, he is a creative Narcissus. He is taking bits from real life to make, in the pool of contemplation, the image demanded by his sensibility, which is more than the mere reflection of his own physical presence, although it may include his Narcissus-projection of the moment. Sometimes the image, whether a landscape or a figure, is purely sensuous; at other times, it also conveys hints of a meaning. In the splash picture, the strong rush of the diver's now invisible body has left a spray of white drops, about which those Bachelardians who specialise in water and its modalities might have something to say. More certainly, in the Peter-by-the-pool canvas, which took such a lot of finishing and has unusually melancholy overtones, the young man, a fully clothed and therefore demythified, *embourgeoisé* Narcissus, is looking down rather forlornly at what appears to be his own naked image swimming in the water. Perhaps this is a way of saying that any modern Narcissus can only oscillate between a dream of pagan living and civilisation, that the most beautiful Narcissus has in the end to leave the pool (which is itself no more than a half-poetic compromise between technology and the natural elements), put on clothes and grow old, and—more poignantly still—that a Narcissus without artistic talent is a flower that will wither except in so far as its image has been preserved in the work of others. The painter may, then, be saying farewell to his model, with distant compassion.

This implication is reinforced by the way the interest of the film seems to shift at times from Hockney to Schlesinger, as if Hazan had realised that, although Schlesinger left Hockney, the character to be pitied is not the artist, who is armed with provincial toughness and in any case will always have his talent to fall back on, but the international model who has no reality apart from the use that other people can make of him. There is a definite suggestion here and there that Hazan is trying to evolve a work of art of his own around Schlesinger, by showing him in flight from Hockney, vaguely setting up as a painter on his own, but basically incapable of anything except the display of his transient attributes in other settings or around other pools, where there are further interchangeable young men, mirror-images of each other.

IF THIS IS SO, the transvestite Miss World Contest in the middle of the film is not a gratuitous fill-in, as I first thought it was, but a relevant piece of grotesquerie, since its extreme negation of physical attractiveness brings out the tragedy of beauty, which—in both sexes—is as inseparable from the concepts of ugliness and decay as good is from evil. When Narcissus looks into the pool, he may see himself as beautiful or ugly, but in the first case he cannot coincide with his being and in the second case he does not want to. What the film is suggesting, perhaps, is that in the given world—in the given image in the shimmering pool—there can be no stability of the beautiful or acceptability of the non-beautiful. The only relative stability is in the objectification of art—for which the lucky Narcissus is gifted, and the others not.

Song

Old Fool sits in love's tree
And sees love pass,
And sees one wheedle her into the grass,
Into the shining grass.

And still he holds his post
For many hours,
His gnarled hands upon a branch of flowers.
Old Fool, what pain is ours.

Gerda Mayer

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James Maloney

A Litany of Farewells

At Five:
Farewell to Miss Bullman, my first teacher,
from whose room I was taken three weeks after everyone else had gone to Class Two.
She was twenty and I was in love with her.
I hope that somewhere she is still twenty and worth loving.

At Six:
Farewell to Archie Hughes; with him at lunch-time every day,
I would pin Annette Charlton into a bricked corner of the yard,
we'd yell at her "Blaaagh", and watch her wet her knickers.
Annette Charlton deserves more than just farewell.

At Seven:
Farewell to Victor Medd who was chief of our gang
but elected without my vote; he lasted until I hit him
with the butt of my toy tommy-gun:—even more painful than it sounds; it was
made by the Royal Army Ordnance Corps
and weighed as much as the real thing.

At Eight:
Farewell to the man who lived next door.
He had a goitre the size and colour of a ripe pomegranate,
one wooden leg, a cleft palate and no friends.

At Nine:
Farewell to Ruby Purdy, who I hope is married,
if only for euphony's sake.

At Ten:
Farewell to Judith Coates, mythologised in her own time
as the most beautiful girl in the school, but
who, like all myths, kept out of sight—and school.
The rumour of her promised appearance became solid
at playtime every afternoon: "She's coming tomorrow!"
She never did.
Lately, someone told me that, true to her mythological state, she's a
bank manager's wife.

At Eleven:
Farewell to George Crow who was my enemy and stronger than me.
Revenge took a longer time, but at twenty-seven he was bald and had rotten teeth.

At Twelve:
Farewell to the people who lived in streets that were named
Ely, Worcester, Chichester;
they called them *Tchaichesta*, *Warcesta* and *Eeli*—different places altogether.

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At Eighteen:
Farewell to Pilot Officer Bernstein who told me that he was by training
neither artist nor scientist
but an economist.

At Twenty-one:
Farewell to the beautiful girl who said,
"Oh, Jim, you are an angel!" when I
lent her my interlined-with-translation copy of *Beowulf*.
Then I remembered what, theologically, angels lack.

At Twenty-two:
Farewell to Emerson who thought that the first step
in becoming a poet was pretending he didn't have a Christian name.

At Twenty-four:
Farewell to Michael Sullivan whose mossy teeth and clammy hands
were the fungal hints of what was going on inside.

At Twenty-five:
Farewell to the lady who on discovering that I was reading English at the
university complimented me: "You speak it very well already."

At Twenty-seven:
Farewell to Wilf Peters, head of an English Department, who bought his Rover
3·5 V8 out of the proceeds of his hand-book, "Hints for Caravanners",
typed out in teaching hours on the college's Olympia 38.

★

Farewell to Norman Morris, the first of my friends
to die. And I am angry that he needs
an unwilling goodbye.

Peter Reading

Duologue

"Whabout that piece as lives on the farm
you delivers to, Stokey? Er as you fancies?
Up-over somewheres, Furrow Ill is it? Or
Mount Flirt or Stonewall Ill or The Warren?"

"Oh,
you means er out Boultibrooke way. I
knowed er long afore ever I come
to drive for South Shropshire Farmers. Well,
er inna bad lookin mind, just one thing
—they reckons as ers a bit loony like. See,
er bloke (im as ad that motor bike crack
comin ome off the piss that time Gonder's Neck way)
e got buried in Boultibrooke churchyard
as lies at back of the farmuss, so
as er looks out er bedroom er sees is stone and
they reckons as ow er throws fits and falls
in a ruck evertime er thinks on it."

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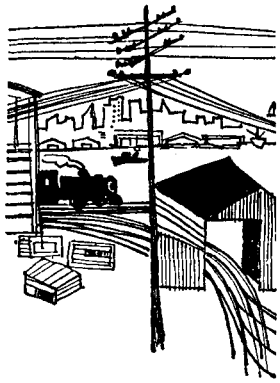
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

Letter from Chattanooga

Views from Lookout Mountain

By Jan Morris



"WHY CHATTANOOGA?" they often asked me, for it is hardly one of the representative cities that foreigners usually frequent when they want to take the pulse of the Republic. Well, it was partly because I like the name, and the song and the friends I made there long ago, but chiefly because it *isn't* representative. It represents nothing in particular. It is in the South but hardly of it. It is a busy industrial town in a region of hill-folk. It is a Republican stronghold in the heartland of TVA, a rich urban centre in the middle of the Bible belt. So it offers a bit of nearly everything, suave to hick, revival meeting with Devotional Songsters to massage parlour with Nude Operators. No sir, I used to tell them, it was no mere fancy that took me back to Chattanooga, Tennessee, for my own American meditations. It was calculated whim.

Also its setting is perfect for the facile symbolisms I prefer. Every morning before breakfast I went walking on Lookout Mountain, a high forested promontory south of the city which was the site of a decisive battle in the Civil War, and is littered with gunsites and memorials. The woods were still damp then, with a lingering fragrance of the night, a few birds tentatively gurgled, the sky was crystal blue above my head and the rib of the mountain ran away, scarred here and there with rocky outcrops, far down into Georgia. Below me, though, between the trees, Chattanooga was generally veiled in a white morning mist, so impenetrable that you would never guess a city lay there at all: until as the sun rose and the day warmed up, as the mist crept away from the mountain slopes and the stir of the awakening town reached me through the white, slowly, structure by structure, Chattanooga revealed itself.

Its downtown buildings showed first, then the sprawl of its suburbs north and south, then the great bend of the Tennessee River with its three bridges, and the shimmer of Chickamauga Lake beyond, until by the time I reached the crest of the hill there it all lay below me complete and ready for the day, and the river ran away sternly through its gorges to the north, and cars glinted in the city streets, and America itself, wherever I looked, seemed to be rising to a new morning, the *Chattanooga Times* and the statutory southern side-plate of hominy grits.

"Anyway", they often added, "be honest, you jes' like the place, don't you?"

"Yep", I replied, lapsing easily into the vernacular. "Always have."

TAKE THAT HOMINY GRITS. It is a cereal made of maize, and though nowadays it often comes in a nasty synthetic-looking dollop, and though when I went to a political breakfast one day I noticed sadly that most of the guests gobbled up their eggs but left their grits forlorn upon the plate, still there is something kindly and reassuring to the stuff, something that smacks of an America not quite homogenised.

Of course nowhere in America can escape the creep of uniformity, distributed everywhere by education, television, and that ultimate blight upon spontaneity, tourism. I never thought of Chattanooga as a tourist centre, but to its publicists nowadays it is the Fun City of the South, one of the most Scenic and Historical Areas in the Nation. Nowhere is immune to tourism, the great leveller. When I first went to Chattanooga passenger trains still used the Union Station, and the Civil War epic of the original Chattanooga Choo-Choo was told with reverence. Today the tracks are full of trains still, but they are motionless, the whole building having been frozen into an immense tourist conglomeration, carriages, booking office, locomotives and all, and called inevitably The Choo-Choo. "Where ya staying?" sober businessmen ask of each other in Chattanooga, and they reply without a flicker "Choo-Choo."

Architecturally too, most American cities are much like most others, and Chattanooga, with 120,000 people, is characteristic of many. Its ring roads are like ramparts. Its business district consists of perhaps a dozen high blocks attended by a waste of car parks. It has no single building

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of much merit, except perhaps some of the better baronial mansions in the mountain suburbs. Standing in one of its downtown streets offers a dispiriting sensation of aridity, as though there is no sap to the place, only a desiccated commercial expertise. You might be almost anywhere in the English-speaking world, in fact, except possibly England.

But the grits are still on the plate, and behind that characterless façade an eclectic variety survives. Chattanooga is not short of individualists, eccentrics even. This is partly perhaps because it is a city of the South, a land of mavericks, and partly because a third of its people are Blacks, the most real of Americans; but it is partly too, I like to think, because the ornery side of the American genius, the Mencken streak, the Truman touch, has never been quite extinguished by the prevailing sameness, and has been held in trust particularly, far from the founts of trend and pressure, by such modest but stubborn cities of the interior.

AN ENDEARING BRAGGADOCIO is part of it, as it has been traditionally part of America. "The view you are enjoying", said a man to me on the mountain one morning, "is the Longest View in the South." I like this kind of thing. I like America to be pleased with itself, and wish it happened more often these days. Fortunately Chattanooga is great on superlatives. Did you know that Chattanooga had the biggest Sunday School in the world? that it is the Electrical Capital of the World? that it supports more churches per head than anywhere else in the world? that the steepest funicular railway in the world runs up Lookout Mountain to the highest railway station in America? that the Choo-Choo Restaurant is the biggest eating-house in the world? that Chattanooga is America's Saddlery? that the view you are enjoying is the Longest View in the South, embracing seven States? "Made in Chattanooga", says the proud boast in many a local store, "by Chattanoogans"—which is to say, created on the spot by the Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning.

With this disarming self-esteem goes a simplicity of manners left over from an older America. "Come right in heah, hon", says the lady at the reception desk when I ask if I may use her typewriter, "come right in an' make yourself *nice* 'n snug." Prosperous burghers, when they order their coffee at the drug store, call the waitress "Ma'am." As for the poorer whites, the red-necks, the times have changed them not a jot. Lanky, prickly, drawly, loose-limbed, they look still exactly what they are, mountain peasants come to town. They speak in a grotesque rural patois, they present a heedless or even a feckless front, and if the women often suggest to me self-sacrificing housewives in dramas of the depression, the men often look like slightly beaten-up Irish Australians—which in all essentials, as it happens, they more or less are.

I SPENT ONE DAY with an elderly woman—pardon me, an *older* woman, a well-known citizen of Chattanooga who splendidly expressed this sense of anachronism. My, as she might say, what fun we had! It seemed to me that though she naturally knew more than I did about Tennessee, I was far more integrated into the contemporary American way of life. A successful journalist, a proud grandmother, a red-hot Democrat, she nevertheless seemed able to ignore almost entirely all the demands of American materialism. Her car was a wreck—"pay no attention to that funny knocking noise." Her manners were utterly without pretence—"which of these darned forks are we supposed to use?" She never watched television, possessed no credit card, did not seem to grasp the basic idea of traffic lights, and very nearly drove us into the Tennessee River off the Dayton ferry—"Nothin' to worry about", the ferryman said, though, "we got a radio link here with the Chickamauga coastguard—soon fish y'all out. . . ."

How many such souls, I wondered, have defied so magnificently all the diktats of the technological age? Like so many American movements the ecological impulse, the impulse towards simplicity, has long since been absorbed into the accepted orthodoxy, and is nowadays propagated as skilfully by General Motors as by Friends of the Earth. The generation that first whole-heartedly embraced it, and gave their emotions to the Greening of America, has graduated from its universities now, emerged from its pacifist furies, changed from its cut-down jeans into suits with waistcoats; whether its members have grown out of those Thoreauesque convictions, too, is anybody's guess.

There were moments in Chattanooga when, clutching my seat as we lurched off the ferry, or exchanging homely grumbles with women in bus queues, I felt that America might still reverse the stream of progress, and become its simpler self again. But I doubt it really. I suspect the powers of American business enterprise, though they may have been jolted lately, are not really much discountenanced. The ecological generation will grow up much like its fathers after all, for it takes more than a bold example here and there, a strong-willed lady, an inbred community, even a generation of dissidents, to fortify a nation against the devices of the profit motive.

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NOW TAKE MORALITY, which is the next best thing to innocence. Chattanooga is just the place for this inquiry. It is a living book of the Bible belt, its First Kings, say, or its Ezekiel. *Hair* is still banned in Chattanooga, those massage parlours will be lucky to survive much longer, and the Inspirational section is dominant in the city bookshops. Chattanooga supports more churches per . . . oh yes, I said that. There is a chapel on every corner, a sect for every taste, churches for the Speaking of Tongues, for the Laying On of Hands, even churches for the Taking up of Snakes ("In My name . . . they shall take up serpents").

The Chattanooga telephone book lists not only the Church of Christ, the Church of God and the Church of God *in* Christ, but the Church of God of Prophecy, the Bible Church, the Bible Missionary Church, the Nazarene Church, the Pentecostal Church, five kinds of Baptist Church, five kinds of Methodist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal *Zion* Church and, oblivious to all heresies, The Christian Church down McCallie Avenue (which operates the Dial-a-Prayer service).

America is a Christian country to a degree long since forgotten in Britain. In Chattanooga, Christianity runs to extremes, but elsewhere, too, it remains a stable and influential force, with power temporal as well as spiritual. But if in the theory the American nation is devout, in the practice there can hardly be a society more riddled with insincerity and opportunism. Everyone knows that. Few Americans over 35 mean exactly what they say, because they have been brainwashed too often, by too many invigilators —by Dale Carnegie or Ralph Nader, by *Time* magazine or Johnny Carson, by Clive Barnes, by Helena Rubinstein, by the Minister, the Sales Manager, the president of the Jaycees, by Mom, by John Wayne, and by all the inexorable, unavoidable pressures of commerce, ambition and survival. America is an inexhaustible fount of new ideas, but for every citizen of true originality, of conscience as of intellect, a thousand find it more politic to suit their views to their circumstances.

And if this insincerity permeates daily life, with all its false flattery and adopted opinions, no less profoundly does it infect the public life of the nation. Watergate was not a phenomenon, only an example. Every day in America, every city, every ward, knows its own corruption: every Chattanooga has its Mr B—"you remember him, the police chief, got caught accepting moonshine money?" The bribe, the bug, the lie, the evasion, the double-talk are strands of the American texture, part of life, part of the system in small things as in great. The venom with which this people turned upon President Nixon, having voted him into office by an unprecedented majority, was only the venom of resentment: for they saw their own Watergates all around them, and even recognised themselves, perhaps, their colleagues or their husbands in Tricky Dick at the White House.

AND YET, AND YET . . . the idea remains, the noble idea of America, which is above all a republic of aspiration. All the splendour of that idea seemed to come alive, when I looked across Tennessee in the morning, in the majesty of that great valley, in the blue mystery of the hills, in the space and spread of it all lying there, so calm, so grand around the city. Which was the truth about America, I used to wonder as I contemplated this spectacle, the idea or the practice? People often tell me that there is a new yearning in America for *goodness*, for a scouring of the national values, and sometimes, even through Chattanooga's garish screen of religiosity, I thought I glimpsed it for myself.

One evening, for example, I went to a revival meeting outside town. It took place in a lavishly furnished sanctuary, all urns and chandeliers, designed, built and named for its presiding evangelist, Mrs W—, and set in a crematorial style among landscaped gardens of devotion. Mrs W— proved to be magnificent, if alarming. With proud fiery gestures she stalked amongst us, warning us of demoniac plots, promising us eternal recompense, abjuring us to repent, to bear witness, to expose false prophets such as some of those we all knew without having to mention names in present company, to speak in the Tongues of Pentecost—"*Shoutin', shoutin', that's what the Lord wants!*"

It was tremendous theatre. Sometimes the Redemption Trio, in pale blue jackets with white lapels, contributed a soothing rendering of *Only Believe*. Sometimes a solitary congregant, abruptly visited by the Pentecostal gift, sprang to his feet and shouted to the Lord in old Hebrew. Aramaic or perhaps Babylonic. People fell to the floor in trances, or writhed at the feet of Mrs W—, or sobbed uncontrollably, or burst into song, and sometimes Mrs W— struck someone heavily on the chest, or hissed at them, or amply embraced them.

I watched it all amazed and often disturbed—for it seemed to me a very good thing, on the whole, that Mrs W— was on God's side. After a while, however, I found myself unexpectedly moved as well. How wan they looked, those intent and trusting Christians! How earnestly, how lovingly even, they listened to the exhortations of Mrs W—! What true pathos and yearn-

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ing filled the hall that night! In the pew in front of me were three school-girls, and when Mrs W— violently demanded that those in need of succour should come forward to be entranced, reviled, thumped, hugged, sung at by the Redemption Trio or shouted over in Chaldean, one of those children, with a wistful smile at her friends, left her seat and walked shakily up the aisle (for she was wearing brand new platform shoes, ornamented with rhinestones).

I could not bear to see what happened to the poor little soul, so I left; and when I looked back from the door she was standing silently in the queue before the preacher, tenth in line among those anguished expectant Americans, waiting still, as one might wait for a stamp at the post office, patiently for the touch of God.

THERE WERE NO BLACK PEOPLE at that shrine, but some of those unnamed who received the lash of Mrs W—'s anathema were, I was later told, black pretenders to the Truth. One can hardly escape the vibrations of race in Chattanooga, standing as it does at the junction of Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama, and as it happens it was on the corner of Broad Street and West 13th, sitting in my dear old green Chevrolet 20 years ago, that I heard on the radio the Supreme Court's forbidding of racial segregation in schools. Hallelujah, they cried that day in the far mountain shanties and the city slums! It was the overture to the racial revolution that has been simmering or exploding ever since, and it seemed to me that in Chattanooga, at least, things had gone well since 1954. There had been riots, indeed, but my white friends seemed to agree that on the whole this fundamentalist southern community had adapted remarkably easily to *autres temps, autres moeurs.*

But it did not seem that way, I presently learned, if you happened to be black. To get a glimpse of the obverse image I called upon a remarkable black woman, a senior official at one of the local Federal offices, who was not so sanguine. It was true, she said that the white hillfolk and the black townspeople, meeting each other for the first time on the factory floor, got on better than their fathers might have dreamt in their uneasiest nightmares. It was true that there was a Black on the five-man city executive, and that petty *apartheid* in Chattanooga was dead. Still from a black point of view, she assured me, the more things changed the more they stayed the same. The old attitudes had not much softened, seen from the black receiving end. A Black was still, in most inter-racial situations, an un-white, even a non-person. The city might seem content, she said, but it was festering below.

I wondered how true this was of America as a whole. She did not answer, merely moved the flowers on her desk with a gesture part irony, part cynicism, part bewilderment, and indeed it was a silly question. Nobody knows. To be black is currently beautiful, of course. In New York I am constantly struck by the elegance and opulence of the black women to be seen enviably furred and maddeningly diamonded on Fifth Avenue. In Washington, which is said to be the biggest black city outside Africa, Black Power is a political fact, and if it expresses itself at one level in violence, at another it blazes with an exhilarating charm and panache. But how deep has integration gone? Does it work? Is it the right answer anyway?

"My liberal principles", said a white Chattanooga industrialist when I asked *him*, "are alive, but ageing." Though his own labour force was successfully integrated, still he had his doubts. He could not get used to it, after all. He could not stomach the idea of black men consorting with white women. He could not believe in bussing, the compulsory ferrying of children between schools to keep a racial balance; it was not only artificial and self-conscious, he thought, it was also ineffective. Twenty years ago he had been one of the most eager integrationists in Tennessee; now he was no more than a liberal half-heart.

THERE IS A LULL NOW in the American race conflict, broken only by sporadic demonstrations. But I take it to be not an armistice, but a mutual withdrawal from a war of attrition. The certainty has gone from the struggle. It is as though there is a tacit acceptance not necessarily of hostility, but of separateness. Blacks no longer want to be like whites. Whites are no longer sure of their superiority. The gulf between the races may be narrower, but perhaps it is deeper too. A mutual tolerance may be the most, as it must certainly be the least, that Americans can expect of themselves.

But after all it is not too sad a prospect. There is nothing ignoble to separate-but-equal, if it is honestly pursued. I find it hard to remember in Chattanooga now that not so long ago a black man could not walk into most hotels, could not eat at most restaurants, was unwelcome in many shops and was altogether unknown in local society. Even now you will seldom spot a black man at the dining-tables of Lookout Mountain, but still the atmosphere, like the law, has changed out of all recognition. "After all", I said to my black friend, as we walked together to her car, "it's only 20 years. It's a lot to achieve in a generation, isn't it?"

"I'm not thinking of generations", she said. "I'm thinking of me."

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OR CONSIDER tyranny. Tyranny is the *raison d'être* of America, just as freedom is its point. The only tyranny Chattanooga has known has been the tyranny of race, but with Watergate in mind this time I wondered what elements of local society might, if the chance arose, incline towards autocracy.

In America it is always possible. I have myself experienced two phases of American history when the extinction of liberty seemed potentially imminent; by its very nature, so delicately balanced upon the points of a written constitution, American democracy is dangerously brittle. At that political breakfast the speakers were the two rival candidates for the Governorship of Tennessee. One was the smoothest of young Ivy League lawyers, with an urbane languor and a witty tongue, the other a swarthy populist with padded shoulders and a boxer's walk: I found it perfectly easy to imagine either of them as little Mussolinis in the gubernatorial mansion.

There are several obvious power centres in Chattanooga. There are the political parties themselves, the commercial organisations, the churches and schools, Rotary, Kiwanis, the Mountain City Club. There are several important industries. There is a handful of rich families, whose elders are to be glimpsed sedate and benign through the double-glazing of their mountain homes, and whose scions may be observed eating Shrimp Creole off tables made of Victory ship hatch-covers at the Brass Register, Chattanooga's brightest Nitery. Above all there is the *Chattanooga Times*, a fine old newspaper, linked by origin and ownership with the *New York Times*, which has for more than a century tempered and civilised the attitudes of the town.

The American Press has always been a rather different institution from the British. In so huge a country the local newspaper has acquired much greater power, and there is something forcefully romantic to the status of grand old organs like the *St Louis Post-Dispatch* or the *Milwaukee Journal*, with their humming offices in the heart of town, their squadrons of reporters, their locally celebrated editors and regionally lionised columnists, their ancillary TV stations and their dashing fleets of delivery vans. It was a Briton who called the Press the fourth estate of the realm, but the Americans were the first, I think, to recognise the concept constitutionally, and ever since the newspapers of America have occupied a station in public life different in kind from their European contemporaries.

IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME, when I was first in Chattanooga, to wonder if the good old *Times* could ever become an instrument of tyranny: but it did cross my mind this time, not because it has ever wavered from its habitual standards of integrity, but because in America as a whole the Press seems to me to have developed an unhealthy new arrogance. One senses it partly in the dogmatism, often slavishly accepted, of critics and editorial writers, but chiefly in the disturbing vogue for investigative reporting. This springs largely, of course, from the success of the *Washington Post* in exhibiting the immoralities of the Nixon régime, but it has gone much farther now. The Press enjoyed that letting of blood, and now too often seems to think that good journalism knows no secrets, respects no privacies, pardons no faults and brooks no reticence.

A nation, they say, gets the Press it warrants, and I think perhaps this predatory journalism does genuinely reflect a meanness or cruelty in the American spirit today. It is bad journalism, to my mind, for it is out of balance. It is unrealistic in its demands. It is immature in its excesses. It is distasteful in its relentlessness. It is often disgracefully inaccurate. It is harmful to the commonalty in its inescapable innuendo that nobody in high office is beyond suspicion. The right to say anything about anybody is not, after all, one of the inalienable rights envisaged by the Founding Fathers.

I find it easy to imagine a tyranny there: those handsome offices, of *Journal* or *Herald-Times*, transformed into bureaus of authority, those columnists and talk-show kings revealed as fawning spokesmen of the régime, those investigative tigers translated without much difficulty into agents of police or secret intelligence. It is not hard to see. They are half-way there already, if not in method at least in instinct; and sometimes from Lookout Mountain, in moments of black fancy, I could even descry the crooked banner of some unsuspected despot, a crazed revivalist perhaps, or an unhinged Rotarian, fluttering from the rooftop of the *Chattanooga Times*.

"YOU'RE GETTING a bit wild now, aren't you? We've got a high-minded set of civic leaders here in Chattanooga, regular nice set of guys. I can't see any of our fellows setting up to be any kind of dictator."

Well, maybe you're right. It's those Martinis. For people of my generation, though, who first knew an America so brave, so powerful, so rich and so generous that it seemed unshakable in its values, it is sad to see how inexorably Americans have come to question their own principles. Nostalgia is not an emotion I ever thought I would feel in Chattanooga, but I often feel it now. I miss those brave days of patriotism, magnanimity and Norman Rockwell. I miss the

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old sensation that in America everything was possible, that hope was here, and decision, and sidewalks paved with gold. It was an illusion anyway, I know, but to the illusion there was not only comfort, but also its own truth.

Today that old exhilaration has become nostalgia. Hollywood America, which so stamped its image upon the imagination of the world, exists no longer. Here as everywhere people are poorer than they were, more worried, less sure of themselves, less happy, I think. Who would ever have envisaged an American shortage of *gasoline*? Who could have foreseen Americans taking cold showers to save fuel? Who could have imagined, two decades ago, the victorious Republic standing half in fee to the United Arab Emirates? The American dream has been shattered this way and that. Democracy is safer in Germany now, and many a poor immigrant might be better off if he had never come.

Even the proverbial efficiency of America is fading. They had run out of corn-flakes at my Chattanooga hotel. They had forgotten to clean the boot of my Budget rental car. The road signs of Chattanooga, once models of lucid common sense, are now almost totally incomprehensible. Even the American telephone system, that unattainable ideal of yesteryear, is showing signs of ennui, and peters away ever more frequently into unexplained blurps and sepulchral silences. Capitalism, like democracy perhaps, has lost the flare of conviction in America, and its flame is guttering all down the line, from the bankrupt airlines and discredited corporations to the car door that won't shut, or the drip in the tap in the room next door.

AND SADDEST OF ALL is the tarnish that has appeared upon the American sense of history. Like everywhere else in the United States, Chattanooga is preparing for the great celebrations of 1976, when Americans will remember their two centuries of independence. All the old texts will be quoted then, all the old principles rehearsed, Mr Jefferson and General Washington will be paraded for our allegiance, schoolchildren from coast to coast will pipe again the Declaration of Independence or the Gettysburg Address. But it is all a pretence. The America of 1775 bears little more resemblance to the America of today than Soviet Russia bears to the Russia of the Czars. It is only lip service to a lost vision, publicity for an abandoned cause.

I discovered from one of the Chattanooga publicity brochures that the very last skirmish of the American Revolution had been fought right there on Lookout Mountain, when a last wandering group of redcoats had surrendered to the mountaineers. I'd never heard of that before, I observed. That was a useful addition to the Scenic and Historical Wonders. Yeah, they mordantly replied, comes in handy for the Bicentennial, too.

AND YET, AND YET . . . America is the land of the fresh divisions, storming in splendidly to the rescue of the old. All is not lost over there! Absolutely the greatest change that has occurred in America in our time is the emergence of the free woman, a new force, a new army. The excitement of this development, its sense of limitless new potential, can scarcely be grasped by people on this side of the Atlantic, and is only dimly perceived I think by most American males, who are not yet aware what is about to hit them. To the women who are themselves experiencing it, though, and who recognise it to be nothing less than a fundamental shift in the balance of human power, it has come as a kind of revelation.

It began grotesquely enough, like so many epochal developments, in the excesses and bullyings of Women's Lib. All that is *passé* now, the bra-burning and the brow-beating and the indignant letters from Minnesota housewives protesting against their rejection as trainee lumberjacks. A new and calmer purpose now dignifies the women's movement, as women have gradually realised that they are arguing not out of weakness, but out of strength—for in evolutionary terms, or so it seems to me, femaleness rather than maleness is the more efficient condition for our times, the more *modern* condition so to speak. For all its inventive genius America is a country terribly set in its ways, socially and politically far older than its years; if anyone is to restore its old excitements, enabling it to stand once more as an exemplar for the world, it is likely to be the free women.

For the American women's movement possesses an ecstatic quality which I take to be much like the spirit of the original America. It rises above tired old syndromes, and sees visions once more. One evening in Chattanooga a young woman came to call on me at my hotel. She was in her early twenties, perhaps. We had dinner together, and as we sat there in the dim-lit velvety restaurant, to the squashy music of the electric organ beyond the hors d'oeuvre trolley, an exuberant radiance seemed to emanate from her, not quite like the glow of a woman in love, more like a cultist's brilliance.

She had not though, as it turned out, been visited at any grotto, or irradiated by Mrs W—: she had simply joined the new Chattanooga branch of NOW, the National Organization for Women, and she was as afire with the truth, the fun and the power of it all, as ever the original American patriots were, when they first sensed the meaning of liberty.

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WHAT CHEEK it always is, to speculate in this maundering way about the affairs of another country! America especially has suffered from impertinence since the start, and when I first went to Chattanooga I was always conscious of a prickly defensiveness in the air. Power, though, if it corrupts, also matures, and in America today a tired *noblesse oblige* is in order. If the old brag has gone, so has the touchiness. In the 1940s Geoffrey Gorer could write of Europe as America's Father-Figure; in the 1960s President could defer to Prime Minister as the repository of experience; today, when Dr Kissinger is thanked for saving the world, he merely says "You're welcome" (though as a matter of cultural interest, in the old American way he still calls a sheikh a "sheek").

But I write only out of love. I loved America the moment I set foot there, and in my walks on Lookout Mountain I only rediscovered my affection. It is no good rationalising America, anyway, for if Brazil is perpetually the country of the future, America is uncontrollably the country of change. It is a country that will never be finished. Its natural state is seismic, or protean. Its citizens may pine for stability, order, permanence: but to live temporarily, from crisis to reappraisal, disillusionment to renewal, is the pride and penalty of being American.

Such were the sententious truisms I thought, along with others less communicable, on those quiet cloud-filled mornings on the mountain. There is no landscape that feels so immovable as the American, so rooted and profound. It is a curious irony that upon it mankind has deposited the most volatile and restless of its societies, never at ease, and awakening each morning not, as the view from Lookout Mountain might suggest, to another day of easeful grandeur, but only to another instalment of clash, doubt and astonishment.

Who can ever be bored in America? New every morning breaks the marvel! Even the Chattanooga birds, chirruping my way back through the woods to breakfast, sounded as though they were speculating, as America has speculated every breakfast-time for two centuries, what in the world would happen next.

Headwaters

Of that river, oily between warehouses,
Glitter glimpsed from bus window
In the crisp unwritten morning,

Sometime later, in the cushioned board-room
Above its wharfed and crane-hung treacle
(Where there is a fuchsia on the table
Between agenda and agenda, bills of lading, lists of sailings)—

In the surgery of the physician
Who listens to the honking port's diseases
(A photo of a healthy child in a garden
Smiling over the prescription pads and X-Rays)—

As the hours drag bales and boxes
Across paper, through a windowless shed
(While a patch of sunlight traverses the yard
To arrive on a step at one o'clock)—

We like to think: I know your pebble-babble,
I have drunk deep where you seep from sour mosses,
Cast stones as you leapt into limestone, and when
Cold clarity touched slate, I was keeping sheep.

Shirley Bridges

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Robert E. Lee

A Morality for Moderns?—By Robert Conquest

It is just over a century since Lee died. His last words, "Strike the tent", showed his customary reticence and lack of panache, contrasting markedly with Stonewall Jackson's famous "Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees." For the last five years of his life, Lee had been working peaceably and patiently as head of the small Washington College, in the Valley of Virginia. In 1865, when one of the most bitterly-fought wars in history had just smouldered to a close, and (except at the masthead of the raider *Shenandoah* far out in the Pacific) the Confederate battle flags were at last everywhere down, the paroled Commander-in-Chief, in his little house in burned and gutted Richmond, was already counselling and practising reconciliation.[1]

Lee's life has often been recorded and judged. A recent book,[2] well produced and containing useful material on some aspects of the Civil War, is yet, even militarily, prone to curious lapses, as in an almost total omission of the very interesting Bristoe and Mine Run campaigns, and a misunderstanding or skimping of Early's invasion, of Petersburg, of Chantilly, and indeed of more important battles. However, when Lee is thus brought to our attention, it is not so much the chronicle of his campaigns which takes the mind as the extraordinary personality of the great Virginian. For the military record, an inadequate account sends one back to Douglas Southall Freeman, G. F. R. Henderson, Alfred H. Burne—all of them very good reading, incidentally (not to mention Henry Steele Commager's incomparable documentary, *The Blue and the Gray*). But let us now consider, rather, the whole man.

The Civil War still—even in this country—attracts enormous interest. Partly this must be due to the combination of political or military genius and attractive moral qualities to be found in a number of the leading American figures, and in particular in the outstanding men on the two sides—Lincoln and Lee. And one is seldom fascinated by characters from the past unless one feels that they are somehow still full of meaning for our own time. Lincoln's was the subtler and more complicated personality and it has been widely written of and variously interpreted. The case of Lee is simpler and clearer; and in certain respects, of which not much has so far been said, he seems particularly relevant to the present day.

He challenges flatly and unanswerably certain personal and public standards which have come to be accepted (or talked about as if they were accepted) in the last few years. He was a "gentleman" in every sense, including those now most reprobated—and yet no amateur but a supreme professional expert. He was heroically combative, fighting past the point of desperation with brilliant aggressiveness—and yet he was never bitter and always considerate. Above all, he was a man of power and command totally without personal ambition—democracy's answer to the conventional "great man." All this is repulsive, indeed unbelievable, to what we are told is the current "climate of opinion." We should not perhaps take this climate too seriously, but it is certainly noisy and pervasive. From entertainers, professional sages, publicity-minded students and cynical-sentimental journalists we get a set of contrary assumptions: that because laws are often objectionable the whole notion of Law in the public field is to be rejected; that because many moralists are hypocritical the notion of principled restraint in private behaviour is despicable; that men who are "good" in the sense of observing traditional standards are not intelligent; that genius must be unbalanced and antinomian.

[1] Lincoln, of course, and particularly in the few days remaining to him after Lee's surrender, also worked for such reconciliation. And it is good to note that the first black Senator, Hiram Revels of Mississippi, took the same stand against the fanatics and time-servers who eventually aborted that reconciliation. Senator Revels wrote to Grant that men of all colours had voted out the "incompetent and dishonest" radical régime in the first post-war free election, and added that the ill-feeling created by the war "would have long since been entirely obliterated, were it not for some unprincipled men who would keep alive the bitterness of the past, and inculcate a hatred between the races, in order that they may aggrandize themselves by office and its emoluments. . . ."

[2] *Robert E. Lee.* By Peter Earle, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £2.95.

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ACTON'S SAYING, which has served liberal-minded people for so long as a great central axiom on the issues of ethics and power, deserves a closer look: "Power," he says, "tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always wholly bad." On absolute power Acton is unconditional. But in the statement as a whole he is conceding that though there is always a tendency in power to corrupt it is not necessarily one that cannot be resisted; and that an occasional great man may not be wholly bad. It is apparent from his other writings that Acton did find some great men who could satisfy his strict criteria. Lee was one of them.

As late as 1881 Acton could write, of the noble and unpopular peace made that year with the Boers by the Liberal Government, that it gave him "heartier joy and a purer pride than I have been able to feel at any public event since I broke my heart over the surrender of Lee. . . ." As for "greatness", he described him as "the greatest general the world has ever seen, with the possible exception of Napoleon."

The possibility of breeding great men who, even on a highly rigorist view, are in no way corrupted by power, is clearly a matter of interest to the democracies and we should examine any authenticated case with some care.

Of Lee's generalship it is hardly necessary to say much. When he took command of the Army of Northern Virginia in the early summer of 1862 the enemy lay, in overwhelming strength, before the Southern capital.

Your pickets posted in front of the Chickahominy
Hear the churchbells of Richmond, ringing.
Listen well to those bells, they are very near tonight
But you will not hear from them again for three harsh years.

Those three years are Lee's military achievement.

Unlike any other victorious captain in history faced with a better-equipped and equally well-trained foe, Lee was never in superior or even equal numbers on the battlefield. His greatest victory, Chancellorsville ("the tactical masterpiece of the nineteenth century"), was won against odds of well over two to one.

It is easy to forget the importance of numbers in the old wars. When fire-power was entirely in terms of the individual rifleman, even a small superiority made all the difference, so long as the armies were more or less comparable in training, experience, and tradition. Napier regards Wellington's decision to stand and receive Masséna's attack at Fuentes d'Onor with 32,000 infantry against 40,000 as "very audacious"—though the British artillery was the stronger, while in the U.S. Civil War the Union artillery was always immeasurably the more powerful. In 1862 General Whiting started proving how the Union superiority must win. "Stop, stop", said Lee, "if you go to cyphering we are whipped beforehand."

Yet, of all the Southern disadvantages, supply was by far the weakest point. The Army of Northern Virginia took most of its military equipment from the enemy. Even Lee's own headquarters had U.S. Army wagons. It was not until Fredericksburg that every man of the army had a rifle. At Seven Pines a thousand men had to be sent to the front without any weapons whatever in the hope of their being used as replacements. The 155 cannon captured with a loss of eight in the campaign of 1862 supplied the main wants of the artillery. Similarly, there was a net gain of 70,000 small arms. Yet Henderson's comment, "the real daring [of the Seven Days] lay in the inferiority of the Confederate armament", remained true of the whole war. More extraordinary still was the fact that the army could be held together in spite of lack of boots, clothes, and food. In the winter of 1863 on the Rappahannock, several regiments reported hundreds of men without shoes. Their feet, in the bad conditions, froze on the ground. At Petersburg, at one time, the ration of some of the

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Southern troops was one-sixth of what their opponents were getting. There is a well-known story of some important visitors to Lee's headquarters—the meal in the general's mess consisted of a large bowl of cabbage upon which lay a small piece of bacon, which all the guests were too polite to take. When Lee remembered this next day and asked the cook to produce it, he was told it had been borrowed for the occasion and returned to its owner.

The military problem was, in fact, a thoroughly intractable one, like many problems of present-day politics. Lee's solutions were remarkable.

"WE HAVE RECORD of few enterprises of greater daring than that which was then decided on"—Henderson on the Second Manassas—is typical enough of military comments on half a dozen of Lee's campaigns. The boldness and imaginativeness are evident to even the cursory reader of their histories. What is less apparent is the careful thought lying behind the choice of the daring course. Lee always preferred (as he put it) the risks of action to the certain loss of inaction. But if he was not one of those generals whose caution leads them into a dead end of timid defensiveness, nor was he a shallow-minded virtuoso, seeking always the brilliant risk for its own sake. As he said himself, "the disparity of force . . . rendered the risks unavoidable." His audacity was the result of a profound consideration of the chances. This ability to estimate the results of all the possible courses of action, without being shaken by the immediate and evident dangers of one or another of them, is a gift which seems desirable not only in generals. The capacity to make a truly objective judgment, uninfluenced by superficial aspects or by temperamental tendencies, would be of use to all our leaders, particularly in circumstances of danger.

If one looks at the summer campaign of 1862—that deep interlocking of manoeuvres, the Valley Campaign, the Seven Days and the Second Manassas—it appears a remarkably brilliant conception even regarded as a sort of chess game played with little black and white squares on a map. Yet the more it is reflected upon the more astonishing it appears. And when to the mere conception one adds Henderson's comment: "It is easy to conceive, it is difficult to execute" and takes into account the actual difficulties of ground, shortage of armaments, the untrainedness of the armies, and the "almost uniformly unkind"[3] fortune which attended all the accidents of the campaign, one may begin to form an opinion adequate to it. Henderson writes:

> "The problems presented by a theatre of war, with their many factors, are not to be solved except by a vigorous and sustained intellectual effort. 'If', said Napoleon, 'I always appear prepared, it is because, before entering on an undertaking, I have meditated for long and have foreseen what may occur. It is not genius which reveals to me suddenly and secretly what I should do in circumstances unexpected by others; it is thought and meditation'."[4]

LEE'S NATURAL ADVANTAGES were so great that the fact that he fell into neither vanity nor humility on the grand scale is particularly remarkable. A cadet of one of the old families, married to a rich heiress of an equally distinguished line, recognised in the old army as its best officer, he was also a man of magnificent presence—as is not, on the whole, conveyed by the photographs. Almost every reference to him, by people as different as Stonewall Jackson and Garnet Wolsey, describes him as the handsomest man they had ever seen. And there is that best of all compliments, from the Northern girl defiantly waving a Union flag at the passing invaders: "I wish he was ours."[5]

But with this went absolutely no panache. Lee's expression, far from being stern, was "always placid and cheerful." He never made a speech, except a few words to his paroled army on the last day of the war. His written orders are occasionally a trifle florid, but in these cases we know that they were drafted by one or other of his staff officers. Papers he had more time to work on (as in his official reports and his letters) lack this entirely. They are almost Attleeish in their understatement.

As sheer military epic Lee's campaigns are incomparable—"This is Virginia's *Iliad*." The military glory side of things did not affect him at all, any more than it did Ulysses S. Grant or Stonewall Jackson. But the legendary atmosphere with which the battles are now charged was not wholly absent at the time, even among educated and experienced officers. At Chancellorsville, as

> *. . . the tattered regiments drove*
> *Under that dawn when Stuart's guns*
> *Spoke from the Hazel Grove*
> *And through the burning forest Lee*
> *Rode like an antique Jove,*

it is his chief-of-staff who unashamedly anticipates the constructions of heroic verse:

> "General Lee, mounted on that horse which we all remember so well, rode to the front of his advancing

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[3] As General Maurice puts it in his *Robert E. Lee the Soldier*, (London, 1931).

[4] Col. G. F. R. Henderson, *Stonewall Jackson*. (Longmans Green, 1919), Vol. 2, p.391.

[5] Lincoln, it will be remembered, was notorious for his ungainliness. Yet Whitman was not alone in seeing in him what he did: "He has a face like a Hoosier Michael Angelo, so awful ugly it becomes beautiful, with its strange mouth, deep cut, criss-cross lines, and its doughnut complexion."

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> battalions. His presence was the signal for one of those uncontrollable outbursts of enthusiasm which none can appreciate who have not witnessed them . . . as I looked upon him in the complete fruition of the success which his genius, courage and confidence in his army had won, I thought that it must have been from some such scene as this that men in ancient days ascended to the dignity of gods."

His concern with those arts which he was to practice at Washington College after the war was most strikingly typified at the very moment described above when, during one of the most tremendous battle climaxes of the war, he started talking to a German military observer about the future education of the Southern people.

LEE'S FATHER WAS a cultivated and scholarly man, well read in the French and Greek classics and the author of admirable memoirs—later edited by his son. There were many virtues in the old Virginia society. Still, a characteristic fault is noted by the rather hostile Northerner, Olmsted: "honourable, hospitable and at the bottom of their hearts kind and charitable, they yet nursed a high overweening sense of their importance and dignity." It was precisely this that was totally lacking in Lee.

It would be a mistake to think of Virginia as an aristocratic polity. The great families had influence, but in politics the people of the state had full control. And it was not just a case of Foxes or Hollands condescending once every few years to a rowdy electorate. By the 1850s Governors and Senators were frequently of the newest blood. And in any case there had never been much of the closed circle in Virginia, even socially. The press, moreover, was free (even in the War) to an incredible extent. The Richmond papers thought nothing of attacking and criticising Lee and the other leading generals whenever they felt like it, and even printed military secrets in an extraordinarily slap-happy way. When Lee, though himself opposed to both secession and slavery, "went with his state" he was not faced with any complicated dilemma about the state's intentions. The people had expressed their views through the institutions which they had thought suitable. That was that. Jackson, a nobody from the backward mountains of West Virginia, was always on terms of complete equality with scions of the oldest planters' families. What is true is that those who rose automatically took on to some extent the old code. It was only after the Civil War that the hillbilly politician came up in the South and began to address himself to an audience not even assumed to be educated, intelligent, or ethical.

Nor was the Confederate Army a cap-touching, class-ridden force of grandee officers and peasant pressed men. Lee was always being approached by odd privates, once for a chew of tobacco, another time (during the march to Gettysburg) to borrow a handkerchief to wipe off sweat. He was so used to this that when a powder-blackened artillery private came up to him on the field of the Second Manassas he turned to him politely and said, "What can I do for you, my man?" It was his son Robert.

An officer close to Lee writes, "his theory, expressed upon many occasions, was that the private soldiers—men who fought without the stimulus of rank, emolument or individual renown—were the most meritorious class of the army, and that they deserved and should receive the utmost respect and consideration." Even with Jackson, it was only after his death that Lee applied to him "the superlatives he was wont to reserve for the men in the ranks alone."

THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, that "aristo-democracy armed with a forlorn hope", became very quickly not simply devoted to its commander, but informed with the completest confidence in him. Nor was this a blind confidence. The rank-and-file realised that errors occurred, but allowed for them. At the scene of the repulse on the third day of Gettysburg, amid the wreckage of the broken assault division, a group of rankers told a British observer: "We've not lost confidence in the old man: this day's work won't do him no harm. Uncle Robert will get us into Washington yet; you bet he will! . . ."[6]

This admiration and affection were felt for Lee by everybody, from men who knew him very well to those like Acton who had never met him, or the New England teacher who was shortly to name his son Robert Lee Frost. What is particularly notable is the ascendancy he established over men remarkable for their extreme independence and tough-mindedness. Acton himself was no enthusiast for the great. Whistler, the painter, whom Lee had expelled from West Point—for (according to Whistler's story at least) stating in an examination that silicon was a gas—remained his fervent admirer. The sharp-tongued "unreconstructable" Jubal Early, whom he relieved of command after his defeats in the Valley, would never hear anything against him. One of the most tough and independent characters in a generation of individualists was Henry A. Wise, a man as old as Lee who had been Governor of Virginia before the War. Wise served, "a grim old fighter", as a brigade commander in the Army of Northern Virginia (where he managed to rebuff a kindly-phrased attempt of Lee's to prevent him cursing visiting civilians, on the

[6] Walter Lord (ed.), *The Fremantle Diary* (André Deutsch, 1956), p.126.

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grounds that while Lee and Jackson were free to pray for the whole army he reserved the right to "do the cussin' for one small brigade"). It was Wise who during the last days had told Lee that for a year the Government had meant nothing to the men in the ranks, for whom Lee himself was "the country." After the War he was hotly rebuking an ex-officer for proposing to apply for a pardon from the Federal authorities, when the young man answered that Lee had approved. Wise immediately said that in that case it was all right; whatever Lee advised was bound to be correct.

Such immediate and unquestioning confidence might appear to be unpleasantly close to the sort of allegiance which goes to the wrong type of "great man." But there are important differences. Wise is not abdicating his own judgment, just expressing his confidence, from experience, that Lee's advice must be honourable. He is not unquestioning, in the sense that he would eventually expect to be told Lee's reasons. And if by any chance Lee had made an exception to his usual standards the follower's confidence would immediately have evaporated. In fact it might be read as a sort of solidarity appropriate to a democracy, yet no less effective than that of fanaticism.

Lee invariably treated his subordinates and others as if it could be assumed without question that their motives and standards of conduct were the same as his own, that the most courteously expressed suggestion would be attended to as conscientiously as a blunt ultimatum, and that all actions would be taken in accordance with a highly developed sense of duty. (It was once represented to him that one officer would not understand that way of talking. After some consideration, he exclaimed that it could not be helped, as he was unable to express himself otherwise.) In particular he was always careful, even in censure, to give as little offence as possible to anyone's *amour propre*.

IT SEEMS A CURIOUS WAY of commanding a great army. On the whole it worked very well. It may be doubted whether James Longstreet's temperament was fitted to this manner of command, and the only important military criticism made of Lee is that he was insufficiently firm with his subordinates—meaning almost always Longstreet, at the Second Manassas and later at Gettysburg. On the other hand, on the average, Lee's method seems to have produced better results than those of other commanders. His own explanation of his patience with the errors of subordinates, given after a brigadier's blunder at Spotsylvania, was this:

> "These men are not an army, they are citizens defending their country. General Wright is not a soldier; he is a lawyer. I cannot do many things that I could do with a trained army. The soldiers know their duties better than the general officers do and they have fought magnificently. If you humiliated General Wright the people of Georgia would not understand. Besides, whom would you put in his place? You'll have to do what I do: when a man makes a mistake I call him to my tent and use the authority of my position to make him do the right thing next time."

This careful attitude to people's feelings was the essence of Lee's method of dealing with failings and inadequacies not in themselves reprehensible. He was indeed capable of anger at flagrant self-seeking—including self-preservation. (At least on the part of officers: at Antietam he asked a private why he was leaving the field. When the man answered: "I've been stung by a bung [i.e. bomb] and I'm what they called demoralised", Lee let him go.)

A character that had no components beyond this mildness, amenity and self-effacement would scarcely be effective on the battlefield. Lee was one of those generals who had no abstract love of war. In 1861 he hoped for peace at all costs and during the War, in ordinary moments, he thought of little else. (It is significant that his great biographer, Professor Douglas Southall Freeman, whose admiration for him is unstinted, yet speaks of "that criminal war.") In battle, however, an extremely combative nature showed itself, expressed, with typical balance, in his well-known phrase watching one of the Confederate counter-attacks at Fredericksburg, "It is well that war is so terrible or we should become too fond of it."[7]

At the beginning of the 1864 campaign when Grant had just been appointed and enormous Northern masses were concentrated on the Rappahannock, Lee (who had not been well) said to his military secretary: "Colonel, we have got to whip them; we must whip them, and it has already made me better to think of it." In the following days his combativeness was shown in the "General Lee to the Rear" episodes in the Battles of the Wilderness and of Spotsylvania. The first was his attempt to lead his favourite Texans in the great counter-attack on the second day, at the crisis of the battle, when the men finally refused to go forward unless he went to the rear. The same happened a fortnight later in

[7] Winston Churchill in his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* puts this remark into a rather false perspective (and slightly misquotes it). He has Lee say it while watching "a scene of carnage", and it thus seems to express a basic love of battle temporarily qualified by a feeling for its horror. In fact it was said as Lee was admiring a gallant (and not particularly bloody) counterstroke and so was the opposite—calling on a basic realisation of the horrors to qualify the moment's enthusiasm.

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the attack that closed the gap at the Bloody Angle. The situation was even more desperate at the Battle of the Crater on the Petersburg front, for there were no available reserves whatever if the counter-attack failed. Here Lee ordered the Alabamans' commander that if they did not retake the Crater on the first assault he would re-form them and lead them in person. The thing had to be done. He was, Fitzhugh Lee says, "very sensitive about his lines being broken. It made him more than ever personally pugnacious." Another Southern general says, "of all things, General Lee most disliked to lose ground after taking his position for battle." Even during the defensive campaign of 1864, usually ranked with Napoleon's 1814 campaign in France, his defence was never passive. His constant cry was "we must strike him a blow" and right up to the last day of the War he almost always managed to get in the last attack.

One of the few things that made him heated was injury to the civilian population. At Fredericksburg he became annoyed when he saw shells falling on a woman's house: "I wish those people would let Mrs Stevens alone." The few Federal generals who aroused his anger were those like Hunter and Pope who behaved ruthlessly to the Virginian civilians under their occupation; during the Second Manassas campaign he often spoke of "suppressing" Pope.

On another occasion, when a Northern cavalry raid had dangerously depleted the stores of the already half-starved army, a subordinate said hotly that if he were in command he would tell Grant that in the circumstances he could no longer feed the prisoners. Lee replied: "The prisoners that we have here, General, are my prisoners; they are not General Grant's prisoners, and as long as I have any rations at all I shall divide them with my prisoners."

At Christmas 1863 he was talking to some of his aides about the plight of the poor families living in the devastated area of North Virginia, whose houses and crops has been burnt by the Northerners. The Austrian observer, Captain Ross, remarked that Arlington (the Lees' home near Washington) had been treated the same way. Lee interrupted him: "That I can easily understand and for that I don't care; but I do feel sorry for the poor creatures I see here, starved and driven from their homes for no reason whatsoever."

A Southern officer once told Lee that he wished all the enemy were dead. "How can you say that, General?" Lee exclaimed. "Now, I wish that they were all at home attending to their own business and leaving us to do the same." Stonewall Jackson's view had been different: "Kill every man."

LEE'S ATTITUDE to the North was in many ways similar to Lincoln's to the South. Both are models of how views may be strongly held and stubbornly fought for without bitterness towards antagonists. Lee almost always referred to the enemy simply as "those people." His remark "the better rule is to judge our adversaries from their standpoint, not from ours", is very close to Lincoln's "with malice towards none."

But for Lee, any Northern military-political combination must have won the War in its early stages. But for Lincoln, the North could scarcely have held together under the effect of Lee's victories. The War often depended on single bullets—the one which killed A. S. Johnston while others were going harmlessly through Grant's uniform at Shiloh, the one that shattered Jackson's arm at Chancellorsville. Another of the hypothetical bullets might be that of Booth, transferred from 1865 to 1861. Who can imagine that Hannibal Hamlin would have succeeded in a task that even Lincoln found desperately difficult?[8]

The quality of Lee's intellect, judgment, audacity, decision is of a power seldom met with, or so one sometimes forms the impression, except in connection with dark daemonic drive. What is so extraordinary in Lee's case is that the whole combination remains Apollonian.

"*Duty's eldest sword.*" Such a description (by Stephen Vincent Benêt) undoubtedly gives an impression of stuffy rectitude. The noisy sacrifice to duty so often made created the idea of it as an unpleasant eidolon. The stoic (even the Christian stoic like Addison) never seems an attractive character. There is the inescapable feeling that he is not practising his virtues for their own sake or simply to live up to his own standards. Partly, at least, there is always the impression of a man dramatising himself, seeing himself as noble. Even if it is a better pose than most, and even if he is not striking a noble attitude for an audience other than himself, his friends, or posterity, the whole thing is debased and vulgarised.

Lee did what he conceived to be his duty without any thought of there being other possi-

[8] Although the noise and outward squalor of American politics was great enough to prevent Acton seeing it, at least at the time, the leader of the North too was a genius and a good man. Lincoln was not, indeed, lacking in ambition. And he was capable occasionally of attributing dubious motives to men of goodwill, as when he told Secretary Welles after Gettysburg, and only partly in jest, that there seemed to be a determination on the part of his generals to let Lee escape. But these were the rarest of lapses. And his situation was a much more difficult one than Lee's.

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bilities. The question of making sacrifices to it hardly arose, since he was immune to ambition, exempt from the love of created things. Thus it was not to him a strong effort, or if a strong effort, one not to be fussed about.[9]

IN A WAY Lee scarcely appears as an example to others. For his actions and attitudes are always completely lacking in preaching. Kipling writes of treating "triumph and disaster" as the same. An enemy general wrote of Lee: "He was self-contained in victory but greatest in defeat." But, apart from anything else, there is no "if" about Lee's behaviour. It invariably has the air of no other course being conceivable. He seems not so much a lesson, as an encouragement to people who feel the same way anyhow. But perhaps that is not as insignificant as it sounds.

The trouble about Lee has always been that, while never freezing into a grand stereotype of republican virtue (as even Washington does), and while always appearing friendly, unassuming, mildly humorous, he never admits the outsider and inquirer to any intimacy. And so, as Benêt says, it is only too easy for him to degenerate into myth—"the blank verse statue." Benêt, after pages of fascinated analysis, has to make do, as an expression of Lee's deepest available feelings, with his saying that he was "always wanting something." But the context of this was a reference to his little daughter being "like her father, always wanting something", which seems simply a light passing remark.

Much has been written in the past, especially in the last thirty or forty years, about "extreme situations." In one obvious sense Lee seems to show, though not uniquely, that the balanced personality which has not, as it were, tested itself to destruction, is as better suited to the extreme as it is to the ordinary. It is true, of course, that the extremes of war, "the intolerable lines of Petersburg", are not what existentialist philosophers and writers have in mind.

One can respect the heroism of those who have explored the ways in which a human being is or may become alienated, be faced with insecurity, the void. But this is not to accept the claim, often implied, that there is any superiority in the unstable. Moreover, as has often been noted, it is a common fault of the extremely introspective to imagine that non-outsiders have less insight into this than is really the case. And even among the explorers of the dark themselves one may detect differences of character which are best judged against a non-introverted system of estimation. In Kafka, and to a large extent in Kierkegaard, one finds a good deal of the balance, humour, and absence of egoism that are apparent in "saner" men like Stendhal—or Lee. And one can see in Sartre, for instance, a posturing egocentricity not different from that of Acton's less reputable contender for the title of greatest general, Napoleon.

LEE'S SUPERIOR, the President, was one of the touchiest characters; so was his great subordinate, Jackson—a difficult position for any commander. But, just as his handling of Jefferson Davis was entirely successful, his relations with Jackson soon made them into a team unrivalled for harmony. The Army of Northern Virginia was not exempt from the passions and rivalries which beset all the armies in the Civil War on both sides (reaching their extreme when J. C. Davis, later a corps commander in Sherman's army, shot his colleague Nelson during the 1862 campaign in Kentucky). Friction between Jackson and A. P. Hill was continuous. It is a curious fact that the army entered the Antietam campaign with its two best divisional commanders under arrest. Lee was always able to patch up these quarrels, and (unlike the situation in other armies) he himself was never affected. Even Hill would accept a sharp rebuke from him, as he did on the North Anna. But usually Lee's adverse comments were mildly, though no less devastatingly phrased, as when after Hill's repulse at Bristoe Station Lee said to him, "Well, General, bury these poor men and let us say no more about it."

The one campaign in which Jackson proved a failure (largely owing to physical exhaustion) was the Seven Days. At Frayser's Farm in particular, Lee had the only opportunity which came to him in the whole war for a Cannae and Jackson's inactivity on the left flank was the main reason why the Army of the Potomac was not destroyed. Few commanders would have concealed their annoyance, or failed to place the blame in their reports. But Lee's control of his feelings in such matters and his calm assessment that Jackson had not exhausted his potentialities led to a report which merely said that "Huger not coming up and Jackson having been unable to force a passage at White Oak Swamp, Longstreet and Hill were without the expected support."

Just as with his strategy, Lee's conduct of official relationships was designed to give the best result possible in the circumstances. He has been accused of failing to be forceful enough with the administration, but it seems likely that any stronger pressure on Davis would have back-

[9] All this sounds, in a way, like Kipling's "If." The actual ethical principles put forward in this poem are in fact similar to Lee's. He would doubtless have smiled at the crudity of the phrasing and the vulgar rewards for virtue at the end.

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fired. The President did once write rather sharply to Lee in connection with a suggestion which he felt infringed the executive prerogative, on which he was extremely finicky.

This is, naturally, not to say that Lee's judgment was infallible in every particular, any more than it was in the field. It seems possible, for instance, that if he had put forward earlier his plan to assemble an "army in effigy" to threaten Washington from the south during the Gettysburg campaign, Davis might have done something about it, perhaps with decisive results. But the main count is in the failure of Lee, or anyone else, to get Davis to rid himself of the Commissary-General, Northrop, on whom more than any single man responsibility for the South's defeat rests. His despatches, Dr Freeman tells us, cannot even now be read without anger. Lee, like all the other generals in the field, complained continually to the Government about the supply situation. It seems fairly certain that Jackson, in his place, would have forced the issue at any cost, with what result is of course not clear. As it was the army fought well on starvation rations —it was only at the beginning of 1865 that physical breakdown began; and the greatest single cause of failure, the starvation of the cavalry and artillery horses, could not be compensated by morale.

Lee's relations with the Government were of a quasi-political nature, of the type which has led generals to believe themselves capable of entering politics. But B. H. Hill, the Confederate statesman, describes a conversation:

> "If we establish our independence the people will make you Mr Davis's successor."
>
> "Never, sir," he replied with that firm dignity that belonged only to Lee: "that I will never permit. Whatever talents I possess (and they are but limited) are military talents. My education and training are military. I think the military and civilian talents are distinct if not different, and full duty in either sphere is about as much as one man can qualify himself to perform. I shall not do the people the injustice to accept high civil office with whose questions it has not been my business to become familiar."
>
> "Well, but, General, history does not sustain your view. Caesar, and Frederick of Prussia, and Buonaparte were great statesmen as well as great generals."
>
> "And great tyrants," he promptly responded. "I speak of the proper rule in republics where, I think, we should have neither military statesmen nor political generals."
>
> "But Washington was both, and yet not a tyrant."
>
> With a beautiful smile he responded, "Washington was an exception to all rule, and there was none like him."[10]

Though Lee thus repudiated any expert knowledge of politics, the advantages of his type of character in the politics of a democracy are obvious enough. It is not only in a general that it would be splendid to secure the qualities which Marvell sanguinely thought he observed in Cromwell:

> *Nor yet grown stiffer with command,*
> *But still in the republic's hand—*
> *How fit he is to sway,*
> *That can so well obey!*

IT IS TRUE THAT Western democracies, or some of them, have worked out a form of public life which inhibits any great abuse of power. Even most of those who are personally untrustworthy on this point are so habituated to the idea that an obvious breach of these conventions will ruin them that it probably seldom enters their minds to make the attempt. But this is to substitute muscle for real trust, and as we know its results are unlikely to be so satisfactory.

Marx's major error was that he took it for granted that in a society in the "transitional" phase he described as the dictatorship of the proletariat the men who would rise to the top would, more or less automatically, be selfless and concerned only to serve the People. He did not see that in any political system ambition and the love of power are likely to be important motives, nor that this was particularly likely to be so in a system without any checks and balances. The whole of English history up to the last century was a struggle to establish a constitutional system, a set of traditions and an atmosphere which long made it impossible, or extremely difficult, for those in executive power to extend that power. No such checks, particularly not the checks of tradition, could exist in the newly-established Marxist republic. And Russia was soon in the same state, politically speaking, as the Rome of Domitian. So it cannot for a moment be argued that the system of restraints, penalties, and awards devised by the democracies is not very valuable indeed. Yet it will hardly be denied that the method rather favours mediocrity. Mediocrity is certainly preferable to tyranny, but surely it might be worth thinking of ways of eliminating it without adverse side-effects.

Lee's combination of profound thought, indomitable will and decision is one at least equally desirable in a political leadership in dangerous times. That it can be produced in the same person as humanity, loyalty, and a complete lack of ambition is a remarkable thing.

ONE OF THE RESULTS of the Civil War which is relevant nowadays is of course that the greatest and most prosperous power in the world, and the main defence of its political and other

[10] A. L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee* (1886), p. 454.

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principles, has had brought home to its indignation (as we in England have not) the meaning of defeat. The South directly and the North vicariously (through the most massive historical and fictional impact ever made upon a national mind) know the feeling of occupation, starvation, puppet government, and economic exploitation. And through the person of Lee they have learnt the great lesson for adults that virtue and merit, genius and determination, do not guarantee success.

The opening of the Civil War produced a crisis of conscience and divided loyalties among many Southern officers, including Lee. But on whichever side they finally felt that their duty lay there was never any doubt about their absolute loyalty and reliability. The Virginians Winfield Scott and George Thomas ("the Rock of Chickamauga") were towers of strength to the North, though Thomas, at least, was for long uncertain where his duty lay.[11] In this matter there was scarcely a case of dishonourable conduct. It is interesting to read the letters and articles of Marx and Engels at that time—they completely miss the point. They continually imply that failures by moderate-minded Northern generals were due to sympathy with the enemy. It so happened that Marx's politically suitable candidate for command was Hooker, whose defeat at Chancellorsville took place in spite of heavier odds in his favour even than those enjoyed by his predecessors.[12]

FOR US—or for the intelligent adults among us—after half a century, ideology has come and gone. After the catastrophe of the attempt to create an amoral humanism, Lee may appear to us with a new relevance. For he illustrates the contrasting splendours of "bourgeois morality", which (as Orwell pointed out) is merely a hostile translation of "common decency"—nor, of course, does "bourgeois" here have any meaning at all: the standards are common to all non-totalitarians. The solidarity of the Hungarian and later the Czechoslovak peoples was, in one aspect, a revolutionary unity of those whose moral views differed, perhaps even on a class basis, against those who had no moral views at all.

Nor, it now appears, is Stalinised pragmatism psychologically viable. Conscious intellectual conviction is one thing. But as we know, the ego is moralised, "socialised", in childhood at an unconscious level. Even in Lee's time Dostoevsky was showing some of the difficulties of the consciousness adopting standards unacceptable to deeper levels of the personality. No doubt over a period the psyche *can* be corrupted in depth, but it *is* a corruption and it has to be paid for (except in a sense by psychopaths, and psychopathocracy is not likely to be a stable society).

The idea of the tender-minded humanist reluctantly accepting the responsibility for massacre and torture, because logic has told him that such is the "only way" to peace and freedom, is a shallow one. A tyrant may enjoy the ancillary luxury of thinking of himself as a humanist, but the essential is that he likes tyranny. Stalin and his imitators, rulers of doubtful sanity creating a society in the image of their own delusions, are the natural end product of a fallacy. The social surgeon who offers to get to the root of our troubles with his expert knife turns out to be Jack the Ripper.

Sublimation has failed to take place. Something else is required.

> *Proportion, not as something calm congealed*
> *From lack of fire, but ruling such a fire*
> *As only such proportion could contain . . . .*[13]

is how the Northern poet sums up Lee: a character, in fact, which has defeated the simple mechanisms of hack psychology. To generalise that way out, so that intelligence and will-power on the one hand, and an unpharisaical morality on the other can be regularly produced in the same person—might not that be a research undertaking as important to free society as the billion-dollar investigations of the physicists?

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[11] And it is a curious fact that while Lee and Joseph Johnston, who commanded the South's last armies beyond the point of desperation, were both opposed to slavery, Thomas (the Union's most uniformly successful general), gave up his own slaves only with the greatest reluctance and at the last possible moment. But even the Northerners Grant and Sherman had had no strong feelings about the institution.

[12] See *The Civil War in the United States* (Lawrence and Wishart)—though it is pleasant to be able to record that even Engels, though ideologically orthodox in his anti-Southern views, could not forbear to cheer their military prowess and wrote privately to Marx, "They fight quite famously" (letter of July 30, 1862).

[13] Stephen Vincent Benêt, *John Brown's Body* (1928; ed. 1970), p.192.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Towards a Corporate State?

London Commentary—By SAMUEL BRITTAN

THERE ARE AT least two different debates underlying the day-to-day arguments about our economic and social institutions.

The first is about the distribution of income and wealth and the associated status and power, among individuals and families. Or, to put it in the vernacular: Who gets what?

The second is more difficult to describe concisely, but its main outlines are clear enough. It relates to the key decisions about what should be produced and by whom, and the determination of *pre-tax* incomes and profits, and the pattern of employment. On the one side are those who believe that these decisions should be made by citizens voting with their purses or their feet, subject to impersonal general rules laid down by Parliament. On the other side are those who believe that decisions should be made by the principal interest groups concerned, whether by agreement or with the aid of the state as referee.

Members of the latter school tend to favour incomes policies; "sensible" price controls; a symbiotic relationship between "industry", the unions and Whitehall; "export drives"; and purposive intervention to save energy, foreign exchange, or whatever happens to be the fear of the moment. They tend to call their opponents "old-fashioned classical economists", "19th-century Liberals", or other epithets which are more flattering than they intend. Their own model tends to be the internal organisation of a large corporation unit writ large on a national scale, and it justifies the label "*corporatist*." The other side take as their standard the external relations of firms to each other and the final consumer in a competitive market place and the framework of law in which they operate: hence the terms "market" or "social market" economists. The division of opinion on this second set of issues cuts across party lines.

THE FIRST ARGUMENT about interpersonal distribution is one to which the terms "Left" and "Right" can be broadly applied; and it follows, of course, a highly partisan course. A "Shadow" spokesman in the House of Commons recently wrote that the two sides in the Finance Committee were separated by a gap far wider than the table which physically separated them. There is a perfectly honest difference of philosophical assumption between the two sides. On the Right, it is assumed that legally acquired income and property belong legitimately to their present owners; and that the onus of proof is on those who want to tax them away. On the Left it is assumed that those whose wealth is appreciably above the general average have to demonstrate why they should be allowed to keep the excess.

It simply is untrue that these are matters on which men can do more than agree to differ. Some American moral and political philosophers have shown that rational argument is possible on such matters without violating David Hume's dictum that an "*ought*" proposition cannot be derived from an "*is*." To do this they have had to dirty their hands with economic theory; while American economists have had to cross academic demarcation lines in a way that would not be considered decent in the U.K. The importance of these explorations cannot be judged by the absence of reference to them on the Washington cocktail party circuit.

BUT I CANNOT REPORT on these fascinating matters here. Let me just observe that whatever one's views on the distribution of income and wealth, there are more and less efficient ways of attempting to implement them. An inefficient

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approach is one that creates or aggravates what are called in the jargon "horizontal inequities"—*i.e.* it treats differently people in the *same* basic economic position, and treats in the same way people whose real position *differs* fundamentally. Left-wing distributional changes are also inefficient if they maximise rather than minimise the effect on incentives of a given amount of transfer away from the better-off classes. They are also inefficient if the sums raised do little to help the least well-off, but are dissipated in indiscriminate expenditure. Right-wing distributional changes are inefficient if they create the maximum protest and discontent for the minimum effective reduction in the higher tax rates.

On these counts both parties stand guilty of major inefficiency: and inefficiency in this area is peculiarly culpable, both because of the passions raised and because moderate efficiency here is not all that difficult to achieve. The Conservatives, after their return to office in 1970, incurred all the odium of headlines about tax reliefs for the surtax class, without effectively giving any such reliefs. Their failure to index their changes meant that the cuts in the higher marginal rates were more than eroded by inflation. The outcry was for nothing. Even after the Budget of 1971, at the height of the so-called "Selsdon" phase, a British professional man or executive could be subject to top marginal taxation of 75%, compared with 50–50% in the U.S. and Germany. If Conservative Ministers had had the courage to introduce either a moderate wealth tax, or a legacy duty in place of the ineffective estate duty, it would have been possible to have gone down to U.S. and German top marginal rates and totally abolish the surcharge on investment income, without any net cost to taxpayers in the middle and lower ranges; and we would have been spared the Labour Government's early 1974 Finance bill contortions.

CHANCELLOR HEALEY'S MISTAKES have been partly a mirror image of his predecessor's. He has demoralised and discouraged the professional and management classes far more than he need have done for the redistribution he wished to achieve—if he even knew what that was. Sums are constantly appearing in the Press about how inflation will take more and more people into the higher surtax ranges; and how tax will erode a higher and higher proportion of their incomes. It will not come to that, as even a Labour Chancellor will have to go in for some informal indexation in these ranges. In other words, we have the disincentives without the revenue. We also have the much greater evil which I shall have to touch on again, that a person's fortunes in life should not depend on the law of the land, as evolved by Parliament, but on the personal discretion of the Chancellor of the day. The piling up of Capital Transfer Tax on top of very high taxes on investment income and capital gains taxes—which often impose a levy on negative real returns—contributes to the horizontal inequities which I mentioned earlier.

BUT THERE ARE TWO OTHER ASPECTS which are even worse. The present Chancellor appears to believe that high taxes simply make people work harder to achieve a given income—the effect of rewards on the choice of career, or residence, or the preference for untaxed on-the-job comforts or the exercise of power, as against riskier and less congenial conditions, seems outside his ken or that of his advisers. The other aspect is the present Chancellor's relish in the discomfiture of the more financially fortunate as an end in itself—of all the reasons for redistribution by far the worst. His notorious remarks in Opposition about "taxing the rich until they squeal" have been reiterated in slightly different words whenever the House of Commons has shown the slightest sign of thwarting his will. I did not think I would ever hear a "socialist" Chancellor sounding so much like a sadistic prep-school master in his sentiments and imagery.

I KNOW THAT many people think that questions relating to individuals are a side show; and that the main issues belong to the second realm—the relation of large organised groups to each other and the state, and their wage, pricing, investment and export decisions. Here is a quotation which might be considered relevant.

> The state must return to its traditions interrupted by the triumph of liberal ideology, and treat modern organised producer groups exactly as it treated the mediaeval corporations. It must absorb them and make them part of the state. To achieve this it is not sufficient merely to recognise them. A far more fundamental change in attitudes is required. On the one hand, organised groups of producers must be recognised as essential and on the other, they must be placed firmly beneath the control of the state, which must lay down their precise functions and ensure that their role of watchdog and guardian should be held within certain fixed limits, in the form of independence without excessive licence. But above all it is necessary to change them from aggressive bodies defending particular interests into a means of collaboration to achieve common aims. The unions and the employers' organisations must join together within each industry to form one single mixed association, organised into two or preferably even three sections.
>
> These mixed organisations could be entrusted with certain functions appertaining to the state, such as the protection of workers, public assistance and professions.

Such combined employer-trade union associations could

> . . . act as friendly arbitrators and provide an effective means of conciliation in any dispute that

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> may arise between its members. But the final judgment of such disputes, acting with the force of law, must be delegated to special state tribunals. We should abandon the rigid dogma which is given the lie every day by the facts that wages and systems of labour are dominated by the law of supply and demand, and instead adopt the concept of a fair wage.

The passages which I have just been quoting may strike the reader as much more closely related to the real conflicts of industrial society than the arguments about the distribution of personal income and wealth, and their reflection in the ritual of party conflict, with which I began. He may also think that they point the way to a solution better than most political utterances you hear today; and if only common sense would prevail over doctrine, the National Enterprise Board could be the instrument of a gradual cooperative reorganisation of industrial society, with the state acting as the umpire of last resort. The ideal is neither the inequality of the market nor equality between individuals, but "disciplined control of inequality and hierarchy within the state."

The passages in question do not come from a leaked interdepartmental report, a PEP pamphlet, or some "Neddy" backroom thinking. They were in fact written in 1920. I hope it will not reduce reader interest if I add that the author was Alfredo Rocco, who later became one of Mussolini's most influential and able Ministers. Nor was he just a technocrat, divorced from mainstream Fascist thinking. He also preached an "activist outward-looking imperialist nationalism" (his own expression). He contrasted the "ephemeral value of the individual" with the "indefinite life of society." In this, "War takes precedence since it requires the individual to make the supreme sacrifice." Rocco would actually have agreed with the sentence in the Fascist credo prepared by Mussolini and the philosopher Giovanni Gentile that "War alone brings up to their highest tensions all human energies and puts the stamp of nobility upon the people who have the courage to meet it. . . ."[1]

STILL, WE MUST NOT GO IN FOR guilt by association. Almost every conceivable permutation of beliefs on different subjects has at one time or another been grouped together by different political movements. Might it not be possible to implement the social and economic ideas just cited "without ideology, war and concentration camps . . ." in a "depoliticised society that would turn its back on the rhetoric of the 19th century, but not on deeply felt national sentiments and seek its way under the guidance of stable and efficient leadership. . . ."?[2]

For the record, Mussolini had by 1939 established on paper the system Rocco advocated, culminating in the formation of a Chamber of Corporations. But, according to one analyst, "vinegar producers and butter manufacturers alike saw in the system a chance to use the immense Roman bureaucracy as public bodies have always been used by anxious capitalists in trouble, that is, as a prop to keep them going until better times."

Thus the ideal was tempered by a little Latin realism.

CORPORATIST IDEAS could perhaps be translated into contemporary British terms in the following manner.

> The way to give teeth to the Social Contract is to make the TUC responsible for forming and enforcing a collective view on relativities among its own members. The CBI should be given similar responsibility for price control, with the object of dividing up the available share of profits in the most advantageous way. There would still, of course, be a need for a central division of resources between profits, wages, and other uses. But the two sides, with the assistance of Government experts, could go a long way towards agreement in a non-ideological atmosphere, leaving to either Ministers or some judicial body the job of making the final adjustments. Once agreement along these lines has gone a certain way, it might be necessary to reinforce by legislation the authority of the CBI and TUC over their own members, to prevent a few black sheep from wrecking the arrangements. There would be built into the whole structure an agreed hierarchy of pay and other differentials running from top executives to the shop floor, which will draw heavily on social survey data of public evaluation of different professions.
>
> The way would then be open for a cooperative effort by Government and industry, in which strategic decisions would be made about which industries should be backed in world markets; and these would be given all the state aid, backdoor and frontdoor, that Ministers could discreetly give without provoking excessive overseas retaliation. Such "planning agreements", deprived of their present class war implications, would largely replace the indiscriminate weapons of exchange rate movements or overall demand management. The whole edifice could be rounded off by a second chamber chosen to represent various interests, professional and occupational groups (including perhaps, 'consumers') which could either evolve out of the NEDC or replace the House of Lords. . . .

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[1] Rocco was not only a successful Minister, but a highly perceptive analyst who would stand head and shoulders above most members of either Front Bench in the House of Commons today; and he drew a very clear link between his economic and his militaristic views. I would strongly advise readers to study him for themselves in a fascinating collection entitled *Italian Fascism*, edited by Adrian Lyttleton (Cape, 1973).

In my own quotations I have taken the liberty of paraphrasing the word "syndicate", a term common in early 20th-century Continental discourse, but little used in contemporary English.

[2] These are some reflections in post-War tranquillity by former Fascists cited in Mario Einaudi's article "Fascism" in *The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (1972).

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The reader will not be surprised to hear that I do not think such corporatist plans are either desirable or workable without going much further towards a totalitarian state than even Mussolini was prepared or even able to do.

Why undesirable? Advocates of the Corporate State—or of concordats between the Government, Trade Unions, and Industry—make the mistake of assuming that, if there is a fair balance between business and labour interests, and between different regions and industries, all will be well. Indeed they regard the clash of interest groups as itself part of the working of the beneficent invisible hand.

The fundamental weakness of this position has been exposed by Mancur Olson:

> Even if a pressure group system worked with perfect *fairness* for every group, it would still tend to work *inefficiently*. If every industry is favoured, to a fair or equal degree, by favourable government policies obtained through lobbying, the economy as a whole will tend to function less efficiently, and every group will be worse off than if none, or only some of the special interest demands had been granted. Coherent, rational policies cannot be expected from a series of *ad hoc* concessions to diverse interest groups.[3]

Where do the inefficiencies come from? Not from simple monopoly pricing, as this would tend to cancel out if practised universally to the same degree. The inefficiencies result from what one might call a fair exchange of restrictive practices: a tariff for one industry, in exchange for quotas for another and a Government subsidy for a third; an agreement to restrict recruiting to one occupation, in exchange for higher entry qualifications in a second and subsidies to maintain the labour force in a third; tax subsidies to house-owners to balance council-house subsidies; and price controls to please the organised consumer interests, with Ministerial task forces to investigate the resulting shortages.

LET US, HOWEVER, ASSUME that all producers are also consumers and that the network of lame-duck subsidies, prestige products, state intervention to "save" specific jobs (and so on) receives not majority, but unanimous, approval. In what sense can the libertarian economist object? Does this not merely mean that people value their quiet life as producers more than the extension of their choice as consumers or the benefits of faster growth? He has no business to impose a long-run view on those who prefer to take a shorter one.

But do they really prefer to take a shorter view? It could well be that many people, if they had the necessary information, and opportunity, would be prepared to phase out their particular interest-group privileges as part of a bargain in which a sufficient number of others did the same thing, and all gained something. Unfortunately, such a bargain is quite unfeasible because of the extremely high costs of information, decision, and organisation involved. One has only to try to imagine the Miners, the Farmers, the beneficiaries of Rent Control, *Concorde* workers, *et al.* attempting to bargain away their privileges and secure copper-bottom guarantees that all the other interest-groups would keep their word. These difficulties are aggravated by the fact that the professional leaders of producer groups have a personal interest in securing a compromise based on an exchange of privileges (rather than in bargains to abandon them, which would reduce their own role and even eliminate their jobs).

There is a further point. The basic ideal of the Corporate State is that of professional and occupational self-regulation. This is made explicit in Rocco's blueprint. But there are already powerful elements of this in the Anglo-American tradition. Lawyers practise self-regulation through the Law Society and the Bar Council; doctors have the General Medical Council. Teachers are more than half-way to such recognition for their own bodies—which is why it is such a disaster when a former National Union of Teachers politician is Minister of Education. The essence of the Donovan Report in the early 1960s and of Michael Foot's policy today is that the unions should regulate and reform themselves. "Industrial self-government" was a frequent alternative put forward by Conservative businessmen in the forty years up to World War II as an alternative both to State Socialism and the supposed "chaos" of Free Competition. We will hear more such calls if the recession or foreign competition deepens—with perhaps some sweeteners in the form of union participation. In practice it means, of course, market-sharing and cartels with back-up support from import controls.

MY STANDPOINT is precisely the opposite. We have too much rather than too little professional self-regulation. I believe—no, I know—that if power can be abused, it will be abused. Unless compelled to serve the general interest by the competitive pressures of the market, or by the laws and enforcement bodies of an elected Parliament, professional groups will (in the nicest possible way) feather their own nests. Even when there is some market competition, as in private medicine, the patient is hampered by the convention that one practitioner does not criticise another. Dog does not bite dog. If there

[3] Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Harvard University Press, 1971), p.124.

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is an unpleasant incident in a local authority housing department, police force, school, or old people's home and we read "an inquiry is to be held", we should be very suspicious until we find out who is carrying out the inquiry. No doubt if in 16th-century Nuremberg there had been an inquiry into the practices of the Guild of the Meistersinger, it would have been an internal one, with Beckmesser as secretary; and a heavy-handed report would have endorsed the decision to "ban" the Prize Song as a flagrant breach of the regulations.

As for the "fair wage" and the "fair profit" I can only reiterate with Friedrich Hayek that no man possesses the ability to determine the merits of another. To decide earnings on merit "presupposes that we can judge whether people have made such use of their opportunities as they ought to have made, and how much effort of will or self-denial it had cost them and how much of their achievement is due to circumstances." This is impossible in a free society or probably at all. Moreover, only a fanatical ascetic would wish to encourage a maximum of merit in this sense. Indeed it is one of the advantages of a market economy enjoying basic bourgeois liberties that a man's livelihood does not depend on other people's valuation of his merit. It is sufficient that he should be able to perform some work or sell a service for which there is a demand.

Indeed a society based on a full-blown system of national job evaluation could prove even less acceptable than the present.

> A society in which it was generally presumed that a high income was proof of merit and a low income lack of it, in which it was universally believed that position and remuneration correspond to merit, in which there was no other road to success than the approval of one's conduct by the majority of one's fellows, would probably be much more unbearable to the unsuccessful ones than one in which it was frankly recognised that there was no necessary connection between merit and success. . . .

This passage from Hayek suggests that the corporate state might be unworkable as well as undesirable.

The basic reason why the corporate state would be unlikely to work lies in the weakness of its self-regulating machinery for setting incomes. This is not the occasion to discuss whether and in what way union behaviour is relevant either to our inflation or our unemployment problem. My only point is that *if* it is in any way relevant then any form of voluntary policy, or statutory policy relying largely on the consent of particular unions, cannot help very much as it is likely to break down after a short interval.

THE BASIC DIFFICULTY is that the benefits from restraint in the use of group market power are what economists call "public goods." They consist of things such as price stability, fuller employment or faster economic growth, which are thinly diffused among the whole population, while the costs are incurred by the group which exercises restraint. It is therefore in the interest of each union group that other unions should show restraint while it exploits its own monopoly power to the full. For it is clear to any particular union leader that most of the gains from price stability and fuller employment spill over to members of other unions and the general public, while the costs of settling for less than he could obtain are highly concentrated among his own members. The chance that an example of restraint by himself will be followed by others is so small that his best bet is to pursue his members' own interests. If the leadership of a union is prepared to look beyond the (fairly short-term) self-interest of its own members, it is likely eventually to be thrown out of office. One does not have to look for "reds under the bed." The "militant" moderates will do the job; and rationally so, from the members' point of view.

Thus there is no possibility of putting teeth into the Social Contract. Relativities Boards and "national job evaluation" schemes are false trails. But they are not harmless. For the illusion that we have a direct instrument for controlling incomes and prices is likely to lead to inflationary (and perhaps hyperinflationary) monetary and fiscal policies under some "needs of trade" doctrine or other rationalisation which we always receive on these occasions.

The inflation example shows how the Corporate State can be both a delusion and a danger. It will not succeed in its professed aims. And the attempt —whether formal or informal—to move in its direction will do harm.

But an asymmetry may be noticed. The aspect which I stressed as unsustainable was the "incomes policy" side. I am not quite so certain that the restrictive and wealth-destroying aspects might not be implemented. After all they are but an intensification of the normal political processes in a democratic state, where particular interest-groups are heavily concentrated, while the general consumer or taxpayer interest is thinly diffused and therefore less powerful.

IN A SENSE I have in the above jumped over the immediate controversies of the Industry Bill to attack the underlying ideas, which many people of moderation and goodwill would like to rescue from it. It would be tempting to me as an iconoclast to say that Mr Tony Benn is being made a scapegoat; that if he did not exist, he would have to be invented; that the NEB will be kept short of funds by the Treasury, and that "planning agreements" are paper tigers.

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Tempting, but not quite accurate. First, Tony Benn's Industry Bill is a recipe not for the regeneration, but the degeneration of Britain. The funds will be provided to preserve existing employment and existing enterprises against change, and—why beat about the bush?—with special emphasis on constituencies of interest to the Government of the day. The preservation of existing employment can be defended as a stop-gap measure to help older workers. But when it is taken to the extent of recruiting new and young workers who would be more profitably and securely employed in enterprises that can pay their way, the process is difficult to forgive. No wonder that representatives of British companies pressed by foreign competition are already muttering words of welcome for the Bill, or that the Ministers most closely associated with it have been setting up a lobby in favour of import controls. The least successful capitalists are to be kept in business and made respectable with taxpayers' money and state directors. This is the utterly reactionary dish, based on a combination of old-fashioned State Socialism and Corporatism of more recent vintage served up by our soi-disant radical Minister. Perhaps Professor Hayek should have called his 1943 polemic *The Road to Economic Slumdom*. We are likely to get the serfdom as well, if the slumdom goes far enough.

ALL THIS IS BUT AN INTENSIFICATION of policies we have seen before under Governments of both parties. But there is a second element. There is a popular belief that the Industry Bill provides for increased "workers' participation" or Workers' Control. It does not. It aims to increase the power of trade unions. The notorious information clauses speak, for example, of disclosure to "relevant trade unions", not to the shop floor. Sometimes the two will coincide, sometimes not. The author of the Bill identifies the cause of democracy with the extension of union power—this at a time when statesmen, officials, economists and ordinary people, are at their wits' end trying to cope with existing union power. It is the mark of the sham radical to confuse the robber barons with Robin Hood.

THERE IS A THIRD ASPECT of the Bill which no one has noticed. This relates to the Planning Agreements which are supposed to be innocuous and voluntary. They are neither. If you will look at Paragraph 3 of the Explanatory Memorandum, you will see that companies that enter into such agreements will be guaranteed regional development grants at prevailing levels. Companies without "planning agreements" will have no such protection against changes in grants or the boundaries of development areas. In other words, the fortunes of a company (and the individuals in it) are to depend not on its own luck and skill, or on known and stated rules, but on whether it is able to satisfy a particular Minister (or his representative) acting, ultimately, on his own discretion.

Whether this has anything to do with the Corporate State is a question of definition. But it is clearly contrary to the idea of the rule of impersonal law binding on governments as well as citizens. Companies who have broken no known law will be subject to favour or discrimination according to the whims of politicians and officials. This systematic breach of the foundations of a free society cannot be compared with particular *ad hoc* agreements by which certain projects or companies have received assistance in the past. The constitutional implications—the move from limited to omnipotent government—far transcend any industrial and economic damage.

This provision alone would justify the House of Lords using its delaying power to hold up the Bill for a year. It is the job of the second chamber when such principles are at stake to use its power even against a temporary majority. If it has not the courage to act against the steamroller tactics of a minority caucus within a minority party, which caucus happens to hold its hands on the reins of power through an historical accident, it might as well give place straight away to a corporatist second chamber.

There is another thing that can be done. The Opposition can announce that promises of grants made on a discriminatory basis to firms who have signed a "planning agreement" will not be guaranteed under another Government. (No Parliament has the power to bind its successor.) It is tempting for the Opposition to become preoccupied with plans for when it returns to office—when events can frustrate the best laid plans. It should not neglect the very real power it can exercise here and now while it is still in Opposition: for example, by making a single simple announcement of the kind suggested.

IN THE LARGER TASK of defeating the Corporate State, the more thorough-going advocates of competitive private enterprise have a common interest with libertarian radicals who wish to "do their own thing" and lead their own lives.[4] If only these two groups could overcome their mutual prejudices—in the one case about non-bourgeois life-styles and, in the other, about the profit motive—the remainder of the 20th century could see an unexpected turning of the tide towards individual freedom and limited government.

[4] I have tried to bring out this connection in *Capitalism and the Permissive Society* (Macmillan, 1973).

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The Anatomy of Translation

On Steiner's "Babel"—By HUGH LLOYD-JONES

GEORGE STEINER seems almost too eloquent and well informed to be real, a sort of literary equivalent of Baron Arnheim in Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften.* Brought up in Paris and New York by German-speaking parents and speaking from the start French, English and German, but with Czech and Hebrew present in the background, he is a truly international man of letters. He is at home with the literatures of his three main languages; he is familiar with modern philosophy and linguistics, both the Continental and the Anglo-American sort; and he has the power to assimilate and communicate the data of sciences seldom accessible to literary men. His English is not that of an Englishman, nor yet that of an American. I find in it little French but much German influence; yet it is not the ordinary Germanic English of the transatlantic *Gelehrter.* He belongs to what he has called "the German tradition of philosophic amplitude"; the reader must understand the dialectical movement of his thought, in which thesis is followed by antithesis and antithesis by synthesis. His utterance is voluble, polysyllabic, full of quotations from and allusions to a wide range of authors.

Confronted with so much erudition and so much ebullience, the English reader's first reaction is often one of alarm. He complains of name-dropping; he points to sentences that seem to him pretentious. He shrinks back before such stern determination to classify all phenomena according to philosophic categories; and he protests in the name of common sense and empirical method against what he finds to be a luxuriant indulgence in metaphysical theorising. Yet if he is an intelligent specimen of his kind and if he persists in reading, he will change his mind. Professor Steiner is not only a widely-read and very clever man, but he has a great quantity of solid common sense; the reader who has grasped the peculiar movement of his thinking must recognise that the judgments he arrives at are for the most part singularly sound. It is sad for him that he did not live in the 16th or 17th century. In our time a style such as his way of thinking demands must become discoloured by the technical vocabularies of the various disciplines whose data its owner has assimilated. Three centuries ago it was possible for Robert Burton —of whom Professor Steiner's work has always reminded me—exhaustively to anatomise an interesting mental condition in a poetic prose of high quality. In our time this is much harder; but despite certain infelicities Professor Steiner has an individual and distinguished style, and this contributes to the pleasure of reading him.

HIS NEW BOOK[1] is not an account of the Russian short story since the First World War, but is nothing less than an anatomy of translation. Its structure is not easily grasped (a table of contents like that given by Burton would have helped the reader greatly). Professor Steiner's dialectical approach obliges him to start by placing the problem of translation in the setting afforded by the general problem of language; almost half the book is devoted to this task.

Language itself poses varied and complex problems. It is dependent upon human physiology, and its existence is in time; as Logan Pearsall Smith sadly reflected, "even words must perish." There are in use some four or five thousand languages, and Professor Steiner gives intriguing details about some of them. My favourite is Kung, a dialect of the Kalahari bushmen that consists largely of clicks and sharp intakes of breath; so far it has resisted phonetic transcription. It is not easy for a person who knows no language that is not Indo-European to understand the enormous difference that can separate one language from another. In studying Japanese one is forced to recognise that what one had lazily assumed to be fundamental categories of human thought are merely local habits. Even

[1] *After Babel.* By GEORGE STEINER. Oxford University Press, £8, $15.

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inside a language, speech can vary immensely according to the sex, age, or status of the speaker. In Japanese there is a word for "*I*" used only in the peculiar language of imperial rescripts, and used there only to denote the Emperor. In that country the language used in letters differs markedly from the language of life, and the language of women from that of men. Japanese has different words for the existential and copulative senses of the verb "to be." Having learned some during the war, I set out in an essay for my tutor to refute St Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God by showing the difficulty of expressing it in that language.

THE MYTH OF BABEL interestingly attests the belief in an *Ursprache*, a primitive language at the root of all extant languages. Behind much of the history of linguistics one may discern the aspiration to undo the act of God which checked the builders of the tower. That same Leibniz who seems to have been the first to argue that extant languages actually determine the thinking of their speakers was also the first to project a universal semantic system, which all men would understand. Wilhelm von Humboldt saw language as a "third universe" midway between empirical reality and the internalised structures of consciousness. His theory is essentially "monadist", holding that different languages generate different pictures of reality. Yet as Professor Steiner observes he leaves the door open to a universalising interpretation, which would admit an element common to the manner in which all languages shape reality.

In our own time Benjamin Lee Whorf, whose volume of essays called *Language, Thought and Reality* appeared in 1956, argued in detail for the view that different language systems give rise to different pictures of the world. Steiner writes with sympathy of this now unfashionable view, perhaps because of his awareness that bilinguals (or even people who know a foreign language fairly well) do not translate literally between languages and do not feel towards the equivalent words of those languages as though they were precisely equal to each other. Even between languages of similar structure, one/one correspondence does not exist.

FEW LINGUISTS AT PRESENT sympathise with Whorf; most accept the universalising theory associated with the generative grammar of Noam Chomsky. The "universal deep structures" which generate language must not be sought, Chomsky explains, at the phonological or ordinary syntactic level. They are located "far beyond the level of actual or even potential consciousness."

Charles E. Merriam and the Study of Politics
Barry D. Karl
Charles E Merriam (1874–1953) is generally acknowledged to be the father of the behavioural approach to political science—a movement that between 1920 and 1940 transformed American political science from a historical field studying theory to a research field examining the psychology of all forms of political activity. In focusing on the efforts of political scientists to increase the influence of the social sciences on national government, the author raises fundamental questions about the social sciences, their place in the university, their relations with social, governmental and political processes.
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A Debate with his Critics
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Progress in locating them has not so far been impressive; and Steiner after a careful discussion remarks truly that "the ancient controversy between relativist and universalist philosophies of language is not yet over." Those Marxist critics who have complained that Chomsky is simply reviving an obsolete dogma of "innate ideas" (see, for example, S. Timpanaro, *Sul materialismo*, 1970) certainly deserve an answer. Steiner concludes that general linguistics will not at present help us to attain an adequate model of translation. A science of language does not yet exist; and he justly exposes the "covert distaste for literature" of those modern critics who search for "objective" criteria of poetic exegesis and of those scientific linguists who resent the "mobile, perhaps anarchic prodigality of natural forms."

IN HIS THIRD CHAPTER, which bears the Quinian title of "Word Against Object", Steiner considers his subject in terms of four successive dualities: *one/many; material/immaterial; public/private; true/false*. He informs us about the physical determinants of speech, about language in relation to past and future, and about the philosophical problem of private language. The difference between the public and private associations of words brings him to the breakdown of ordinary language for literary purposes, which he thinks was foreshadowed by Hölderlin and Gérard de Nerval, came into the open with Rimbaud and Mallarmé, and was made explicit by Hofmannsthal in his *Chandos Letter* of 1902. From the ultra-private new languages which this generated he passes to the search for an ultra-public new universal language that started with the decline of Latin in the 17th century. He rightly concludes that neither this nor the logico-analytic notations of modern philosophers has done much to deepen our understanding of natural language or to modify its use. Still more interesting is his survey of language from the aspect of truth in contrast with fiction. After giving an account of the modern discussion of the philosophical problem of truth, Steiner protests against the logicians' and linguists' insistence on viewing falsity only under its negative aspect. Nietzsche, he reminds us, said that we needed lies in order to vanquish the cruel reality of the world; the plurality of language must be vindicated against the restrictive force of unifying systems.

This takes us to a point halfway through the book. The English empiricist will feel that he would have taken for granted the somewhat negative result of the enquiry so far without going over all the ground he has traversed with Steiner. But he must acknowledge that the conclusions reached are very much those which he himself would be willing to accept, and will hope that the argument will convince other readers of different philosophical sympathies.

Now follows a 60-page chapter on "The Claims of Theory." Of the various general theories surveyed the most helpful is that of John Dryden, who distinguishes literal translation, free translation and an intermediate kind. Goethe offers a similar tripartite scheme, but relates each of his three types of translation to a different phase in a nation's cultural development. It might be more useful to modify Dryden's scheme not by introducing the notion of chronology, but by using that of purpose. A translation made simply to communicate a factual content will tend to literalism; one made for purely literary purposes will tend to freedom; one made for mixed purposes will tend to belong to the intermediate kind.

Some literary translators interested in content have evolved a systematic method of literal translation, by which words and phrases are constantly rendered in the same way. Steiner curiously fails to mention the first important European translation, the version of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint that was made by Alexandrian Jews during the third century B.C., according to tradition on the orders of King Ptolemy Philadelphus. The Aramaic and Greek terminology of translation used by contemporary writers with reference to this work fits with his insistence that translation is itself a kind of interpretation.[2] Yet the translators closely followed the wording of the original. The medieval translators of Aristotle rendered him so closely and so consistently that it has proved possible to restore a lost Greek manuscript from a Latin version with every confidence that the restoration is correct.[3]

Poetry offers difficulties to the translator which prose, unless it is markedly poetical prose, seldom presents. But not all poetical translations are free renderings. Steiner quotes Dante, Rilke, and Nabokov as defenders of a literal method. Hölderlin's translation of Pindar, which was not published in the poet's lifetime, is so literal that it has been debated whether it was really intended as a translation, and not as a kind of crib made for the writer's private use. Steiner rightly regards it as a remarkable translation; but he does not remark what seems to me a fact of great interest, that despite its fidelity to the original it remains, like all its author's work, profoundly German and romantic. The literal method has produced few satisfying renderings of poetry—Browning's

[2] See G. Zuntz, *Opuscula Selecta* (1972), p. 128 f.

[3] See R. Kassel, *Der Text der Aristotelischen Rhetorik* (1971), p. 70, referring to B. Schneider, *Die mittelalterlichen griechisch-lateinischen Übersetzungen der Aristotelischen Rhetorik* (1971).

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Agamemnon (which Steiner discusses at some length) and Nabokov's *Eugene Onegin* (the famous attack on it by Edmund Wilson is not mentioned here) are cases in point. On the whole it remains true that a translation of a poem is either a bad poem or an unfaithful rendering. Steiner discusses a translation by Rilke of a poem by the 16th-century writer Louise Labé. Rilke's version is, as Steiner says, a "more important" poem than the original; but the peculiar charm and naivety of the original is not rendered. Rilke's version is his own, and is a thing of beauty. But one cannot help feeling that his action in writing it is in questionable taste. Since antiquity poets have claimed the right to make what they can of other poets' work. But if they make use of it, they run the risk of exciting this kind of feeling.

Steiner's discussion of theories ends with a commendably sceptical conclusion: he thinks the hope expressed by modern theorists of "a progressive systematisation, of an advance from local inventory and insight to generality and theoretic stability" is a delusion. A careful discussion,with much neuro-physiological detail, of the possibility of a theory of language leads him to conclude that without a theory of language there can be no theory of translation.

THE PRACTICAL SECTION of the book begins at p. 296; 118 pages on "The Hermeneutic Movement" are followed by 56 pages on "Topologies of Culture." Steiner offers a fourfold division of what he calls the hermeneutic movement necessary to produce translation. First initiative, trust; then aggression ("the second move . . . is incursive and extractive", which reminds me disagreeably of a visit to the dentist, though I suppose a sexual analogy rather than a medical analogy is intended); then incorporation; and finally restitution. This somewhat scholastic classification does not seem to me particularly helpful; but it serves as a framework for the concrete treatment of actual examples, which after so much theorising brings life.

AS AN ANATOMIST OF TRANSLATION Steiner has certain limitations. His main strength lies in his three chief languages. Dante is often quoted, but there is little handling of later Italian (nor, surprisingly in such an expert in Neo-Marxist literary criticism, does Steiner seem to know the Italian Neo-Marxists). There is no sign of direct acquaintance with Spanish, or Russian, or modern Greek.[4] Steiner does his

[4] Kimon Friar's magnificent translation of the *Odyssey* of Nikos Kazantzakis would supply an anatomist of translation with valuable material. Friar has described his intimate collaboration with Kazantzakis himself in the *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. II, no. 2 (1971–2), p. 215 f.

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best to deal with the problem of Chinese, but clearly lacks direct experience of the structural differences that separate this and other Oriental languages from the languages of Europe. He quotes Ezra Pound and Arthur Waley, and gives an appalling extract from a ponderous German rendering of Wang Wei by one Hans Bethge but not the new Wang Wei by Walter Robinson,[5] a scholar who can write poetry. He deals with several translations and imitations of Greek and Latin poems but without going deeply into the specific differences between these languages and those of modern Europe. Greek and Roman metre is fundamentally different from ours, since it depends on the quantities of vowels, not on stress, accent, or rhyme, and this means that many of its subtlest effects can hardly be indicated in translation. Here is a topic which I find more directly relevant to the central issue than much of the abstract theorising to which Steiner has devoted so much space.

But we must be grateful to Steiner for what he has given us, for it amounts to a good deal. His wide knowledge, acute intelligence and marked sensitivity to the nuances of poetical expression are everywhere in evidence. He deals entertainingly with travesties: with the sham Italian medievalism of Rossetti, with Littré's rendering of Dante into medieval French and Borchardt's rendering of him into medieval German. One of the best sections is devoted to the French struggle against Shakespeare. It reminds one of the price paid by French literature for its attainment to classic excellence during the 17th century; it lost a quality which of the great writers of that time only La Fontaine knew how to keep. Mallarmé and his contemporaries worked desperately to recover it; Rimbaud intermittently succeeded. The late Dikran Garabedian, whose literal version of Shakespeare's sonnets into the French of Shakespeare's contemporaries[6] might interest Steiner, felt about French poetry after 1600 what Talleyrand felt about French life after 1789. Steiner is severe (as it seems to me, justly) about archaism in translation, which he thinks seldom comes off. I share his dislike for the sham Biblicism of Jowett's *Plato*; the valuable time lately devoted by a group of scholars under a learned editor to purging this work of its howlers might have been better spent on a replacement. I wonder what Steiner would say about the rendering of Herodotus into Biblical English by J. Enoch Powell. He admirably discusses two versions of Shakespeare's 87th sonnet by Stefan George and Karl Kraus. His analysis of several versions of a wonderful passage from the account of Priam's visit to Achilles in the last book of the *Iliad* lends substance to his judgment that though Pope's *Iliad* is a great poem in its own right no translation of this author gives more than a slight notion of the impact made by the original.

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STEINER REMARKS THAT "it is only lately that the translator—such as Constance Garnett, C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Arthur Waley—has been emerging from a background of indistinct servitude."

Anyone who knows what wages publishers pay to translators, and what miserable hacks they are consequently often forced to employ, will know the reason for this. Gifted writers whose bent lies towards translation are often treated little better than such hacks. Stephen MacKenna, whose wonderful translation of Plotinus he justly praises (and from whose journal he quotes some interesting remarks) almost starved in order to complete his work. Some major European writers cannot be properly appreciated by English readers unable to read them in the original, because good English translations do not exist. As for Constance Garnett, she does not deserve her place on Steiner's list. Years ago Sir Isaiah Berlin pointed out that she turned all

[5] Penguin Books (1973).
[6] *The Sonnets of Shakespeare translated into French "Regular" Sonnets*, Clarendon Press (1964).

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the Russian authors whom she translated into the same grey, flat, muddy prose. No one reading Dostoevsky in her version would guess that he is often very funny; now that we have David Magarshack's translations, hers are no longer needed. Thomas Mann cannot possibly be appreciated by a reader who knows him only in the ponderous and frequently inaccurate renderings of Mrs H. T. Lowe-Porter; not long ago a really good version of some of the short stories was published in America, but had to be withdrawn as a result of legal action. Some good translations of great writers are not as wholly satisfactory as they are thought to be. Scott Moncrieff's Proust is certainly far better than the continuation by Stanley Schiff; but when I have compared sections of it with the original I have been less impressed than I expected. His weakness is a tiresome kind of *New Statesman* competition cleverness, which is reflected in the catchpenny titles. How can he have rendered "Aux Ombres des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs" by "Within a Budding Grove", when Tennyson offered "A Rosebud Garden of Girls"? But when Moncrieff was writing one was hardly allowed to mention Tennyson. Arthur Waley was a great scholar as well as a remarkable writer, and his rendering of *The Tale of Genji* is a great achievement; but those competent to judge tell me that it has a thick patina of modernity.

The law of copyright ought not to limit people's right to offer new translations of books that deserve to be looked at from the point of view of more than one translator. Translators should be properly paid, but before being paid at all they should be carefully selected, for one small qualification they should have is an adequate knowledge of the language of the original. Corvo once agreed to meet a man called Sholto Douglas in a Brighton hotel and translate the Greek epigrammatist Meleager. When they got there, each found that the other knew no Greek. But this did not prevent the version from appearing. I have reviewed at least one translation by a translator no better qualified than they were.

The cause of translation will be greatly furthered by the existence of this learned and intelligent Anatomy, from whose study all readers, and not only intending translators, will greatly profit.

A Deeply Flawed Hero

On Skidelsky's Biography of Mosley—By VERNON BOGDANOR

THE terrible realities of the 20th century impose peculiar and severe obligations upon the writer of contemporary history. Such obligations press particularly hard upon anyone attempting a biography of the leader of a totalitarian movement. Men such as Hitler and Stalin are likely to be seen as so uniquely repulsive that the imaginative sympathy necessary to the successful biographer will be entirely lacking. Yet without some attempt at understanding even the most distasteful protagonists upon the contemporary stage, history can be nothing more than a collection of dry bones. Some questions are answered—what happened, when and where. But the vital explanations—why? how could it happen?—are not resolved. History becomes chronicle rather than interpretation.

History, however, imposes upon us a conflicting obligation; the avoidance of special pleading. Political apologia, written directly at the behest of a tyrannical ideology, is likely to convince only the politically uneducated or the immature. But of course, there are much subtler kinds of special pleading—more devious and more dangerous. There is, for example, that special pleading which results from omission of facts whose introduction would disturb the picture that is being painted. In 1947 Christopher Hill succeeded in writing a book entitled *Lenin and the Russian Revolution* without discussing Leon Trotsky's role in the revolution. The late Isaac Deutscher attempted to extenuate Stalin on the grounds of historical necessity; and he presented Trotsky as an apostle of political freedom and quasi-liberal virtue. For Deutscher, Trotsky was heroic but Stalin was necessary. "His vision of Soviet affairs is essentially simplistic", as Leopold Labedz observed, "Despite the difference in political sophistication, it does not deviate all that much from that of the 'Red Dean' Hewlett Johnson. . . ."[1]

E. H. Carr, a very different case, has been attacked for abasing himself before the facts of power, both in his pre-War justification of appeasement, *The Twenty Year Crisis*, and in his *History of Soviet Russia*. Carr has been accused of over-emphasising those aspects of Soviet

[1] Leopold Labedz, "Deutscher as Historian and Prophet", *Survey* (No. 41, April 1962), p. 143.

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history which led to the triumph of the Bolsheviks, and underemphasising the ideas and importance of opposition groups. Of the first volume of his *History of Soviet Russia*, Isaiah Berlin wrote: "if Mr Carr's remaining volumes equal this impressive opening, they will constitute the most monumental challenge of our time to that ideal of impartiality and objective truth and even-handed justice in the writing of history which is most deeply embedded in the European liberal tradition."

These approaches to history, then, may all be seen as challenges to liberal historiography, and indeed to the justice that is the very least the defeated and the dead have the right to demand of us.

THESE REFLECTIONS are provoked by the appearance of Robert Skidelsky's biography of Oswald Mosley.[2] Skidelsky is a fine historian whose first book *Politicians and the Slump* (1967) dealt with the unemployment policy of the 1929–31 Labour Government. In that book, Sir Oswald Mosley was "the hero, as he deserves to be." Sir Oswald is also the hero—a deeply flawed hero, but a hero none the less—of this biography. "It is time", argues Skidelsky, "that the case for Mosley was made by the historian"—although, of course, the only case that the historian is required to make is not for or against an individual, but for that rounded view of reality which constitutes historical truth.

> . . . In my judgment, sufficient time has now elapsed for one to be able to view his life and the causes he espoused with both detachment and sympathy. If, therefore, this book presents him in a more favourable light than that to which many readers are accustomed, I can only hope that they will see this as his due. . . .

Skidelsky *does* present Mosley's fascism "in a more favourable light" than that to which his readers are accustomed; but he also provides him with a good deal more than "his due."

For this reason, my remarks will be almost wholly critical in tone. This is not to deny that there are many good things in the biography; and indeed for Mosley's pre-fascist period, Skidelsky displays an admirable critical approach and independence of judgment. What is so depressing is that at the very point where such critical discernment is most necessary—in dealing with the fascist period—Skidelsky's judgment deserts him. It is for this reason that his biography is, in the end, inadequate either as an explanation of Mosley's fascism or as an account of its nature. For anyone old-fashioned enough to believe that some of what Skidelsky calls the "ideas and values in whose name Mosley has been pilloried" constitute those very values of "impartiality and objective truth and even-handed justice in the writing of history" of which Isaiah Berlin speaks, there is a duty to analyse the faults of his biography.

In his own autobiography, *My Life* (1968), Mosley sought to defend himself against the two main charges that have been brought against him—anti-Semitism and the use of unprovoked political violence. His defence is not remotely convincing.[3] Skidelsky's attempt at rehabilitation does not rely upon the crude omissions and distortions of fact which characterise Sir Oswald's autobiography. He sets out the factual evidence accurately, and on the whole, fairly. Indeed one remarkable feature of the book is that in it can be found the very factual evidence for an alternative—and, in my view, more satisfactory—view of Mosley than the rehabilitation that Skidelsky provides.[4]

What gives the book its character of special pleading is Skidelsky's failure to draw the appropriate conclusions from the situation of European democracy in the 1930s, a failure to draw conclusions from evidence that he himself provides. At bottom, the defects of the book result from a failure of the moral imagination that is responsible for the desire to rehabilitate Mosley, and to offer such a seriously unbalanced account of his career.

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[2] *Oswald Mosley*. By ROBERT SKIDELSKY. Macmillan, £6.95.

[3] Although it succeeded in convincing a large number of reviewers in the quality press. The continuing correspondence in *The Times* during October 1968, initiated by Bernard Levin, revealed a shocking derogation of duty on the part of many journalists.

[4] It is perhaps for this reason that the critics found themselves divided on the question of bias. It was no doubt to be expected that Mr A. J. P. Taylor, who regards Mosley as "a superb political thinker, the best [*sic*] of our age", should find (*Observer*, 6 April) the biography "ruthless over the Fascist period, bringing out *to the full* [italics added] its violence and anti-semitism. . . ." Michael Ratcliffe in *The Times*, Rudolf Klein in *New Society*, and so shrewd a judge as Robert Blake in *The Sunday Times*, all found the book perfectly fair. Sir Oswald himself was understandably "happy to recall that when he [Skidelsky] began it never occurred to me he would reach conclusions often favourable. . . . (*Spectator*, 5 April), especially as it gave him the opportunity to reiterate on BBC-TV his conviction that the Jews were, in the early 1930s, "powerful", "on top", and pressing for war.

Professor John Vincent's review in the *Times Literary Supplement* (4 April) was idiosyncratic—in two charmingly parochial analogies he saw the Durham Miners' Gala as "the nearest English equivalent to the Nuremberg rally", and Mosley's anti-Semitism as comparable only to Left-wing prejudice against the aristocracy. Nevertheless Vincent noticed two sources of bias in the biography. First, selectivity in the use of evidence—Skidelsky, he claimed "does a good job in taking suspect anti-Fascist evidence to pieces. He is rather less enterprising in taking Fascist partisan accounts to pieces, or in digging up evidence damning the Fascists. . . ." Secondly, Vincent noticed Skidelsky's persistent attempt to separate the actions of Mosley from those of the *BUF*; and this he saw as having "apologetic significance."

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CONSIDER SKIDELSKY'S ACCOUNT of the most contentious elements in Sir Oswald's career: *(1)* his encouragement of anti-Semitism and political violence, and *(2)* his attitudes to Nazi Germany and the Second World War.

Mosley has always insisted that he was not anti-Semitic in the 1930s—"we attack Jews for what they do not for what they are. . . . No Jew could be attacked on ground of race or religion, only for political opinion or action." Skidelsky rightly gives this argument short shrift. He does not ignore the fact that Mosley supported and gave sustenance to anti-Semitic prejudices. But he seems to accept Mosley's further claim, that when he *did* attack Jews, this was only in self-defence. "We did not begin the struggle", claimed Mosley in *Blackshirt* (October 1936) "until we had evidence of its necessity. We did not begin—the Jews began." Skidelsky seems to accept the perverse view that the Jews were to blame for the campaign against them. "The prominence of Jews in the Olympia disturbances brought to a head the submerged issue in British fascist politics: the Jewish question." What changed the *modus vivendi* with the Jews was (according to Skidelsky) "the attitude of Jews themselves, and they must take a large share of the blame for what subsequently happened."

To back up this extraordinary assertion, Skidelsky quotes the support of A. K. Chesterton, a member of the *BUF*, later founder of the League of Empire Loyalists, and later still involved in the politics of the National Front. Chesterton, a notorious anti-Semite (although, according to Skidelsky, he "offered another example of that passionate, abstract patriotism so characteristic of the *BUF*"), claimed that "a Jewish body calling itself the British Union of Democrats sent round van-loads of Jews all over the country to break up Blackshirt meetings." This, claims Skidelsky, "may have been the 'organised band of Communists' whom Mosley complained of. . . ."

Such "evidence" is, surely, ludicrously inadequate to support Skidelsky's charge that the Jews "must take a large share of the blame" for the attacks upon them. In fact, organised Jewry was not involved in attempts to break up Fascist meetings. The British Board of Deputies wisely advised Jews to stay away from Fascist meetings, precisely so as not to provoke violence.

Nevertheless, after the Olympia meeting, "Jews were responsible for the next escalation" on the grounds that "Police and other reports suggest that East End Jews formed a high proportion of the demonstrators at Olympia; and threats of a similar assault forced the *BUF* to abandon its White City rally planned for August." It is, indeed, a curious doctrine to hold that the threat of a

The fate of intellectuals and artists persecuted for their convictions, political opinions or social commitment cannot be ignored by the world public, both from an ethical point of view and as a matter of professional solidarity.
Prof. Frantisek Janouch

Don't make it easier for them to turn us into Orwellian non-persons. Do not forget us. Invite us to conferences, ask us to give lectures . . . turn to us for reviews and other contributions to journals, books, questionnaires on various problems. Make it possible for us to publish our work.
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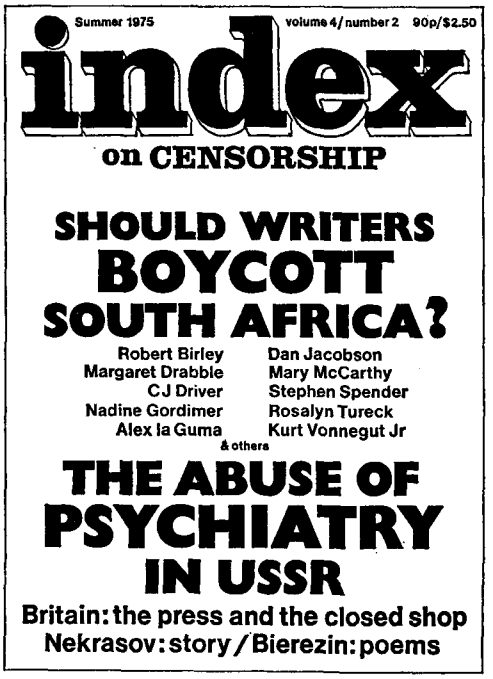

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demonstration by a minority of Jews, not officially sanctioned, makes them "responsible" for the vile campaign which Mosley unleashed against the Jews as a whole. It reminds one of the riposte made to the Fascist who argued that "the Jews were to blame." "Yes", was the reply, "the Jews and the motor-cyclists. . . ." "Why the motor-cyclists?" inquired the Fascist. "Why the Jews?", was the reply.

Nor is this all. The *BUF* must be seen, not only in the context of British politics, but also in the context of what was happening in the rest of Europe in the 1930s. The apologists for the British fascist movement seek to portray a picture of one small isolated political movement being broken up by "Jews and Communists." But during the 1930s, a number of fascist parties arose in Europe, many of them involved in anti-Semitism, and all of them involved in political violence. The Nazi Party, with which the *BUF* claimed emotional sympathy, was of course the prime example, but other fascist movements also had ugly records of political murder and criminality. In the countries in which fascist movements had come to power, they had shown no compunction in setting up a one-party state, and in liquidating political opponents. Out of power such movements had taken the battle to the streets and preferred assault and battery to the niceties of parliamentary debate.

THEREFORE, ANY ideological movement which modelled itself on a European fascist party—uniforms, flags, slogans, philosophy—could only expect to become the target for heated political opposition. In so far as the *BUF* was not prepared to dissociate itself from the activities of its continental counterparts—and it was not—its own political predilections have to be judged in the context of the actions of these counterparts. Skidelsky, in my view, seriously underestimates the pro-German orientation of the *BUF*. From the very beginning, the *BUF* applauded Hitler's actions, and *Blackshirt* greeted his accession with an article, "Hitler, the New Man of Germany", by Sir Oswald Mosley, whose aim was "to mark the lesson . . . we shall advance to power quicker than the Germans."

Skidelsky appreciates, of course, that Mosley had adopted "a name, a style and a livery that he knew to be particularly abhorrent to a section of his fellow-countrymen. . . ." But he fails to draw the appropriate conclusion from it. Indeed his concern to impute responsibility to the Jews for the campaign that befell them, leads him to align himself with the apologists:

> A Jewish malaise of this time was to be obsessed by fascism. If some Jews found it intolerably provoking, they certainly went out of their way to be provoked. Fascist meetings drew them as a magnet. The very sight of a Blackshirt in uniform was enough to make their blood boil.

MOSLEY'S SECOND DEFENCE of his campaign against the Jews was that they were seeking to drag Britain into war with Germany, a war which (according to Sir Oswald) might have saved German Jews from persecution, but was not in Britain's interests. In a speech at the Albert Hall in October 1934, marking the beginning of the formal anti-Semitic campaign, Mosley declared: "The organised power of Jewry, in a racial interest, has consistently striven for the last eighteen months and more to foster a policy of war. . . ." But already in *Blackshirt* on 4 November 1933 (unsigned, but, according to Skidelsky, by Mosley) was an article entitled, "Shall Jews Drag Britain to War?"

Skidelsky argues that "Hitler's initial assault on German Jewry had transformed the Jewish communities of the world, but particularly of America and Britain, into a formidable political lobby against Nazi Germany and its foreign sympathisers", and that "There was certainly a case to be made out here against allowing the terms of public debate on an important foreign-policy issue to be unduly influenced by a minority ethnic interest."

But this, too, is disingenuous. For there is no evidence, and Skidelsky provides none, that Jews acted in ways that were not an entirely legitimate and appropriate part of the democratic process. Those Jews who opposed the appeasement of Hitler's Germany or favoured a boycott of German goods had a perfect right to do so, without being subjected to abuse and physical attack by Fascists or by anybody else. Skidelsky argues that Mosley "had a strong case against the Jewish boycott of German goods"; it is hard to see how this "case" comes anywhere near extenuating, let alone justifying, the anti-Semitic campaign.

But, in any case, in accepting that the Jews were "a formidable political lobby", Skidelsky vastly over-exaggerates both the power and cohesion of Jewish pressure groups in Britain or the United States in the 1930s. Indeed, if the Jews were as "formidable" as Skidelsky suggests, it is surprising that they were unable to secure a relaxation of the immigration laws in favour of their persecuted co-religionists in Nazi Germany and Eastern Europe. Such a relaxation would, of course, have led to the saving of countless Jewish lives. But, even after the *Krystallnacht* of 1938, Neville Chamberlain could escape, unscathed by any "formidable pressure groups", with the suggestion that

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Jewish refugees be settled in former German colonies in Africa.[5]

Nor is there any evidence of a coordinated Jewish attempt to press for war with Germany. Of the two most prominent Jewish politicians in the 1930s, both declared for appeasement at different times. Lord Samuel made a speech in the House of Lords supporting the Munich Agreement and was offered a Cabinet post by Neville Chamberlain; and Leslie Hore-Belisha was Secretary of State for War in a Cabinet which approved the agreement. A moment's reflection must show that Mosley's charge, half-endorsed by Skidelsky, is quite absurd. Does the fact that Jews are being harassed in the USSR mean that most Jews are against détente? And yet, so easy is it nowadays to fall into thinking in stereotypes, that Skidelsky uncritically repeats stale innuendoes.

Skidelsky's contention is that Mosley finally tumbled headlong into anti-Semitism as a result of the Jewish boycott of German goods (even though, as Skidelsky admits, such a boycott was not endorsed by the leading official Jewish organisation, the British Board of Deputies). As a result of what A. K. Chesterton called Mosley's "thorough research" into the question, he became consciously and avowedly anti-Semitic. If Mosley was persuaded by Chesterton that the Jews dominated British national life in the 1930s, he was clearly so credulous that it is difficult to see why anyone should ever have wished to take him seriously as a politician. The alternative is to argue that Mosley used anti-Semitism in a thoroughly unscrupulous way to win support for his political movement. Skidelsky inclines to the latter conclusion. He fails to note, however, that Mosley's policy towards the Jews, to be put into practice when he came to power—first, deprivation of citizenship and then enforced deportation—happened also to parallel that of Hitler, (called by Sir Oswald "that singularly shrewd and lucid intellect") before he settled upon the "Final Solution" of total extermination. And in *Blackshirt* (20 June 1936) the following piece of doggerel was published:

> *We'll raise the golden fasces high*
> *Beneath their shade all Jews shall die.*

To THE CHARGE of using unprovoked political violence, Mosley's reply has always been that the *BUF* acted only in self-defence against the

[5] See Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue* (1970) which provides a devastating indictment of the inactivity of the Roosevelt Administration on this issue. But the response of the British Government was, on the whole, a generous one. See A. J. Sherman, *Island Refuge* (London, 1973).

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threats of Communists and Jews to break up his meetings and processions, and thus to deprive him of his rights to "free speech." Skidelsky shows that the Communist Party did aim to break up *BUF* meetings, and did indeed endorse a general tactic of breaking up opponents' meetings long before the *BUF* appeared upon the scene. Although he does not accept the apologist's view that such threats exonerate Mosley, he strives to give Sir Oswald the benefit of the doubt, even where there can be no doubt.

In particular, Skidelsky fails to appreciate the scale and intensity of the violence which Mosley engendered. He writes: "The nearest parallel to Mosley . . . was the young Lloyd George, in full cry against the Boer War. There was . . . an even greater violence: for example, a man was killed at Lloyd George's Birmingham meeting of 1901." Of course, the fact of one death shows nothing about the nature and extent of the violence; otherwise, the recent death of the student Stephen Gately in Red Lion Square could be used to show that the "National Front"—or the "International Marxists"—were responsible for more unprovoked political violence than the *BUF* in the whole of the 1930s. Skidelsky quotes the views of eye-witnesses of the notorious Olympia meeting; but does not realise how Blackshirt violence added a new dimension to British politics. To take just two examples from many:

> A man in the arena got up and shouted 'That's a lie.' A squad of fifteen Blackshirts dragged him across several rows of seats, knocked him to the floor and kicked him, repeatedly, apparently in the face. *Daily Telegraph*, 12 June 1934.

> . . . I saw a man lying on the ground obviously powerless and done for, being mercilessly kicked and horribly handled by a group of certainly not fewer than eight and probably ten or twelve Blackshirts. Gerald Barry, Editor of the *News Chronicle*, in a BBC broadcast, 8 June 1934.

Such calculated and brutal violence, deliberately inflicted, is very different from the rowdyism met with by Lloyd George and even from the deplorable street tactics of the Communists; nor can it be used to justify Skidelsky's extraordinary conclusion that the Blackshirts "on the whole . . . acquitted themselves with aplomb in many difficult situations, and often with conspicuous courage"; and that as regards violence, Mosley "in this respect was as much, if not more, sinned against than sinning." It was, indeed, the relishing of violence *for its own sake* that constitutes perhaps the most repellent feature and distinguishing mark of European fascism.

Skidelsky mentions that the Roehm purge, the so-called "Night of the Long Knives" in Germany, occurred three weeks after the Olympia meeting, and "artificially associating the two events and the two movements" served to fuel liberal fears. But he, rather inexplicably, fails to mention that *Blackshirt*, the *BUF*'s journal and Mosley's creation, endorsed Hitler's actions; as indeed it continued, on the whole, to do, until and beyond the outbreak of war.[6]

THE SCALE OF FASCIST VIOLENCE led the National Government to legislate the Public Order Act of 1936 prohibiting the wearing of political uniforms and proscribing "quasi-military organisations"; it also gave to chief police officers the power to ban processions for up to three months with the consent of the Home Secretary. Skidelsky does not commit himself as to whether "the natural consequence" of the actions of Mosley and the *BUF* was to provoke a disturbance of the peace, which, in accordance with the doctrine of *Wise v. Dunning* (1902), would have justified prosecution. He argues: "The question is complicated by the fact that his [Mosley's] effort to convert some people entailed attacking others, but this is, after all, what political controversy is about."

Skidelsky is also concerned to rehabilitate Mosley's foreign policy position in the 1930s. Indeed, he argues that "Churchill and Mosley represented the two logical choices facing Britain in the 1930s. Mosley's offered the best hope of peace; Churchill's the best hope of winning a war."[7] Such an interpretation derives such cogency as it has from a view of Hitler's ambitions obtained, in part, from *Mein Kampf* (where Hitler claims his goals to be limited to expansion in the East) and, in part, from the "revisionist" A. J. P. Taylor's *Origins of the Second World War* and his biography of Lord Beaverbrook.

Of the many weaknesses of this view, perhaps the most glaring is to assume that Britain would have been able to resist Nazi domination *after* Hitler had satisfied his appetite for *Lebensraum* in the East. Mosley, Beaverbrook, and A. J. P. Taylor all believed that a Britain which had massively rearmed could afford to pursue an isolationist foreign policy; the implication being that the main fault with appeasement was that it was never properly followed through. But, given the narrow margin by which Britain survived in 1940, one may legitimately doubt the "revisionist" contention that Britain could have survived

[6] Colin Cross, *The Fascists in Britain* (1961), p. 116.
[7] Mosley now believes that Hitler "in the final period had no sense of moral law or of the limitations of the will" (*My Life*, p. 371). Some may believe that there was no need to wait for Hitler's "final period" to appreciate that.

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in the face of a Nazi Germany that, having conquered the whole of Eastern Europe, was in a position to exploit the vast natural resources of the U.S.S.R.

In fact, as Alan Bullock has noted, the question of whether Britain could have survived in a Nazi-dominated Europe did not arise since

> . . . it was Hitler who took the initiative in turning the formal state of war between Germany and the Western Powers into a real war. On 9 October [1939] he produced a memorandum in which he argued that instead of waiting to see whether the Western Powers would back their formal declaration of war with effective force, Germany should seize the initiative and make an all-out attack on the French and the British, thereby removing once and for all the limitations on Germany's freedom of action. . . . It was Hitler who decided that enough was not enough, that the war must go on.[8]

It is a pity that Skidelsky does not deal with this argument which casts considerable doubt on the plausibility of Mosley's position; Skidelsky's defence here approaches the queasy borderline dividing biographical charity from special pleading.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, clearly, to be sure whether Mosley was, as many believe, a potential traitor; whether, in the event of Hitler's invasion of Britain, he would have collaborated with the enemy. Skidelsky argues that he would not so have done, claiming that the motives for collaboration were strongest for fascists living in small states such as Norway, Holland, or Sweden, whose only prospect of power was as representatives of a Nazi-dominated Europe.

Such an argument totally disregards the record of fascists in one "large state" which Hitler *did* succeed in conquering, namely France; and there domestic Fascists proved, on the whole, to be eager collaborators. Such collaboration was, of course, of tremendous advantage to the Nazis in that it gave them a powerful source of leverage against the Vichy régime. For, if Pétain and Laval refused to collaborate to the satisfaction of the Germans they could always point to Jacques Doriot waiting in the wings. It may be that Mosley would not have played the same role as Doriot; but since nobody could know for certain, it must have been right and proper for the British Government, threatened by invasion in 1940, to insure against the possibility.

PERHAPS THE WORST FEATURE of the book is its systematic distortion of standards of moral judgment. Skidelsky uses euphemisms to exonerate Mosley from the worst of the charges

[8] Alan Bullock, *Hitler and the Origins of the Second World War* (British Academy Lecture, 1967), pp. 283–4.

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made against him, at the same time severely castigating those foolhardy enough to fall foul of his hero. Mosley's anti-Semitism is referred to as "intellectual and moral carelessness", and the playing of the *Horst Wessel Lied* at Mosley's Oxford meeting as "not perhaps auspicious." But Manny Shinwell was "viperish" in attacking Mosley's defection from the Labour Party; Commander Locker-Lampson was "obsessional"; the opposition to Mosley's release from prison in 1943 was "mean and squalid"; and in excluding Mosley from public life, Britain (in Skidelsky's view) was being deprived of "an original and distinctive voice from the political dialogue" which was "a particular loss to the nation as the great issue was joined between peace and war."

The effect of Skidelsky's interpretation is to provide a modest, but undeserved, rehabilitation of Sir Oswald. It is a pity that Skidelsky does not take sufficiently seriously the possibility that Mosley was driven to Fascism, not by the comparatively humane motives which he attributes to him, but by inherent defects of character. These defects were clearly apparent and were indeed identified when Mosley was still a member of the Labour Party, *viz.* in the Smethwick by-election of 1926, when *The Times* (13 December 1926) referred to him as "one on whose behalf nightly scenes of disorder are enacted." In fact there are (and perhaps always have been) two sides to Mosley's character—the civilised and courteous political thinker, and the vicious admirer of Nazi Germany and of the Teddy Boys, characterised by Mosley as "fine types", who attacked coloured immigrants in the late 1950s. Because Skidelsky does not take this latter aspect of Mosley's character seriously enough, he is unable to offer a convincing explanation of Sir Oswald's transition to Fascism. Such an explanation would, in my view, cast serious doubt upon the "lost leader" thesis.

WHY HAS A YOUNG HISTORIAN as well-trained as Robert Skidelsky found himself caught up in such a web of mistaken judgments and misinterpretations? In part, surely, the answer is a generational one. As the inter-War years recede from memory, so a new generation is tempted, understandably, enough, to raise the banner of historical revisionism. But the danger involved in any charitable revision of Fascism is that of ignoring the ideological and moral threat which it offered to the values of Western society. Skidelsky appears to accept, with one part of his mind, the myth that there was something "heroic" about the Fascist revolt; otherwise, why should he speak of Blackshirts acting with "aplomb" and "often with conspicuous courage"? But, in truth, there was little that was heroic about the Blackshirts, the *squadristi*, or the *S.S.*, or about their respective leaders. The aged Mosley may now appear too unlikely a figure ever to have gone down the whole vile path which was beckoning; but to underestimate Fascism's capacity for evil and to argue a case "for the defence" of a Fascist leader, without acquiring what Hugh Trevor-Roper has called the "stereoscopic vision" that alone can provide historical objectivity, is to involve oneself disastrously in a failure of the historical imagination. It is sad that the talents of a fine historian have been so wasted.

Well-written as it is, Skidelsky's biography unwittingly provides ammunition to those who seek to deny the realities of Fascism in the 1930s; for whereas few will be influenced by Sir Oswald's own apologia, there will be many who will find themselves led astray by Skidelsky's heady concoction. Indeed Skidelsky expresses the hope that a "better appreciation" of the past "may lessen the inhibition of the present against allowing Mosley's voice to be heard on any issue affecting the future." The exclusion of Mosley from the contemporary dialogue is, he claims, "both mean and unwise."

Croce may have been wrong in arguing that "All history is contemporary history", but it would be a mistake to ignore the contemporary relevance of the history of Fascism, and excessively complacent to believe that the preconditions of Fascism and racial politics have entirely disappeared. Echoing Mosley's argument that Jewish citizens must refrain from exercising such legitimate democratic rights as are enjoyed by their fellow-nationals, Arab states attempt to stimulate a Western boycott of Jewish banks and stores. A new generation, feeling neither guilt nor responsibility for the Holocaust, may be more willing to tolerate the substitution by the more unscrupulous members of the Left of "the Jews" for "Zionists" (or the "paid agents" of either or both) in their ritual slogans. Such arguments may well come to the fore amongst those who blame Israeli intransigence, or even the fact of her existence, for the energy crisis of the West.

The energy crisis itself and the economic difficulties which it brings in its train may herald the break-up of post-War consensus politics. The collapse of prospects of economic growth in Britain and the fear of an American depression are likely to lead to new strains upon the body politic. It may well be that the social conflicts of the 1930s will reappear, albeit in altered form. A petit-bourgeoisie ruined by inflation and a working class trapped by unemployment clearly offer splendid opportunities for a political demagogue of the Mosley type. The secret activities of General Sir Walter Walker and his home-grown vigilantes, and the street violence of the

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"Shrewsbury Two" (one of whom was a member of the right-wing National Front before becoming a martyr of the Trade Union Left) may presage the growth of deeper hatreds. Britain now has a sizable population of coloured immigrants, and it is surely not difficult to foresee one target to which these hatreds might be directed.

The contemporary historian, then, bears more than ever an inescapable moral responsibility to avoid bearing false witness. Should he be deficient in the exercise of that responsibility, he would do well to ponder Swift's dictum, "I never wonder to see Men wicked, but I often wonder to see them not ashamed. . . ."

Exiles

New Fiction—By JONATHAN RABAN

THERE IS SUCH a strong family likeness between Joyce and John McGahern that it is almost too obvious to be worth remarking on. To wander from McGahern's new novel, *The Leavetaking*,[1] into *Portrait of the Artist*, *Exiles*, and the first hundred or so pages of *Ulysses* is like listening to four movements of a single symphony. There are changes of pace and emphasis and key, but the theme, whatever variations are played upon it, remains essentially the same; and McGahern's and Joyce's prose styles bleed imperceptibly into one another like the voices of kissing-cousins.

"History", announced Stephen Dedalus to his headmaster Mr Deasy, "is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake." *The Leavetaking* opens on the playground of another suburban Dublin school, with another Nestor-like headmaster called Mr Maloney, and another young man trying to awake from his past, from the engulfing abstraction of being Irish. He has no name, nor—except to her father, who calls her Isobel—does the American divorcée whom he has married in an English registry office. As "I" and "She" they stand in for everyone who has sought a private peace on the far side of History where neither Ireland nor America, two nations twinned in their power to suffocate their children, can reach them. Unlike Stephen, McGahern's teacher needs to be dismissed before he can take his leave. His marriage is not recognised by the Church, and at eight in the evening the priest will hand him a formal notice of termination of contract. It is a solution for which dozens of Irish writers have craved: the hero of *The Leavetaking* does not have to go through the anguish of rejecting his history; his history gives him the sack.

Between that afternoon on the playground and the evening interview with the priest, the novel rehearses a private past which is also a public history, a chronicle so Irish that it turns into an anatomy of the emotional pathology of Ireland. Its movements are too formal to be properly called flashbacks; rather, they are like phases in a ritual. As in a Mass, it passes from confession and absolution to communion and benediction. Recurring images continually chime through it. The hands of clocks are stopped, or lurch from one minute to the next; gulls wheel and clatter down for scraps of bread—greedy shadows in turmoil, an Irish nation in miniature. Engaged in this wolfish parody of communion, even the gulls seem like descendants of the birds which Stephen fed with scraps of cake from O'Connell Bridge in *Ulysses*.

> The shadows sweep over the concrete, violent and very fast; and I search for one slow shadow to follow before turning to the air, where the violent sweep of the shadows is reflected in a white frenzy above as it nears to when they can fall on the scraps of bread. (*The Leavetaking*)

> Looking down he saw flapping strongly, wheeling between the gaunt quay walls, gulls. . . . They wheeled lower. Looking for grub. . . .
> Wait. Those poor birds.
> He halted again and bought from the old apple-woman two Banbury cakes for a penny and broke the brittle paste and threw its fragments down into the Liffey. See that? The gulls swooped silently two, then all, from their heights, pouncing on prey. Gone. Every morsel.
> Aware of their greed and cunning he shook the powdery crumb from his hands. They never expected that. Manna. (*Ulysses*)

[1] *The Leavetaking*. By JOHN MCGAHERN. Faber, £2.50.

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Here, as so often in *The Leavetaking*, McGahern's writing works in collusion with Joyce's, drawing strength from the echoes it evokes. It is not a case of imitation or pastiche so much as a bold statement of a common concern. At his best, McGahern writes so beautifully that he leaves one in no doubt of his equality with Joyce: the similarities between the two writers spring from a sense of tradition which is thoroughly and profoundly shared. And that is something which one is so unused to encountering in 20th-century literature that it is tempting to mistake what is really a glory for a shabby vice.

For the novel's formality, its assured seriousness, its air of ritual are dependent on this conviction that it is possible to share a history and a language. Every phrase gathers weight and darkness from the past on which it feeds so confidently. The heart of the book is the sequence in which the child watches his mother die of cancer and spies from a distance on her funeral. It is written with extraordinary purity and exactitude and it makes the desolation which it records at once fiercely unique to the child in the novel and universal. It would be barbarous to give a quotation from it, but it should be said that its rhythm is as stately as that of a requiem, its vocabulary has a dignified simplicity, yet it is always miraculously alert to the particular. A wren flitting among the branches of a laurel interweaves with the mourners and altar boys, bringing the general tragedy of everybody's dying into sudden unbearable sharp focus. McGahern has a genius—and that word does not overstate what he does—for mediating between the deep currents of feeling which belong to myth and history and the exact texture of the moment, seen so freshly that it comes off the page in a vivid cluster of sensations.

AS LONG AS *The Leavetaking* stays in Ireland, it reads like a masterpiece. Its landscapes, set in Leitrim and Dublin, build up powerfully, soaked in the grey drizzle of Catholicism and its priesthood. The young man and the boy he once was grow from this dank country mutinously and inevitably. When people talk, they do so in sentences as brief and formalised as versicles and responses. Every paragraph of McGahern's writing is able to draw on a deep reservoir of nuance.

But, quite unexpectedly, the novel suddenly goes adrift when it moves to London and the love affair with the American girl. One symptom of this is the new explanatory amplitude in the dialogue. When the girl is met in the bar where the man has taken a temporary job, she talks about her bullying father.

> "It's not an easy story to tell, in fact it's fairly incredible, and it's very American in spite of its European base. He lives in a big house in Holland Park. He has an English wife younger than I am, two kids, half-sisters of mine. He works—if you can call it work—as an interior decorator, but that's just a distraction, a lifelong obsession with rooms. The real money comes from an older woman who's been infatuated with him for years and whom he treats abominably. They have a flat they share in Mayfair, with servants. He has a bachelor flat in St James's as well. . . ."

We have been suddenly ejected from that world where everything is known, and needs only to be hinted at to come alive, into a place, a country, a state of mind, where everything needs to be explained. And McGahern, so brilliant on the familiar, turns out to be surprisingly clumsy when it comes to dealing with strangers. He simply has very little gift for making people talk outside the phatic code of the family. And Ireland in his work is a vast extended family of dull relations who know too much about each other for their own comfort. England, a neutral territory, is a place of long creaking sentences and incomprehensible characters. The girl's father, who gets too much space to himself in the crucial middle of the book, is a ramshackle creation out of cultural science fiction, a bug-eyed monster. The girl herself is too beautiful, too tender, too evanescent to be real; a dream or a muse rather than a person.

On *things*—the feel of walking on a street or sitting in a room—McGahern's splendour is undiminished. But this leads to some very odd effects indeed. One watches a real cigarette and a real glass of beer in ghostly motion against a background of real furniture and a real floor. But the people who activate these objects are at best smeary, at worst transparent. It is as if out of Ireland they had ceased to exist except as shadows in suits of clothes.

Yet *The Leavetaking* asserts a quite opposite truth: that only by leaving can life begin. Its moral force is all directed towards exile; but its style stays stubbornly at home, refusing to budge from the landscape out of which it has grown. It asserts a salvation in the marriage between two separate refugees—a sacramental marriage which supplants all the hopeless pieties of Irish history.

> My love waits for me in a room at Howth. The table will have bread and meat and cheap wine and flowers. Tomorrow we will go on the boat to London. It will be neither a return or a departure but a continuing. We will be true to one another and to our separate selves and each day we will renew it again and again and again. It is the only communion left to us now.

But the wife is a ghost-bride. One feels at the end that the man's leavetaking is really just as

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solitary as Stephen Dedalus's was; that his wife is a phantom in his breast. In Joyce she was called Art; in McGahern she is said to be an American divorcée, but the language of his novel is too truthful to be fooled by such a thin disguise. Strangely, with honour, and often with immense power, *The Leavetaking* eventually turns itself inside-out. Like Joyce and Flann O'Brien, McGahern reveals that leave, however much it may be ached for, cannot be taken.

IT IS THE MELANCHOLY preoccupation with the meaning of exile that lifts the new Nabokov, *Look At The Harlequins!*,[2] far above its recent predecessors and makes it his saddest, most likeable book since *Pale Fire*. Too often lately, enchanted—almost as enchanted as the author himself has seemed to be—with that gross, ingenious intelligence, one has woken up to find that one has been enamoured with an ass. But after all the spoonbending, sharped cards, false-bottomed boxes and bamboozling with which it's crammed, *Look At The Harlequins!* survives as a magnificent novel about solitude. It is alternately wickedly funny and heartbreaking.

It purports to be the memoirs—the *Speak, Memory*—of an émigré Russian writer called Vadim Vadimovich whose trashy novels are frequently mistaken for those of Vladimir Nabokov. The confusion is pardonable. Vadimovich's *Slaughter In The Sun* does bear rather more than a passing resemblance to another book called *Laughter in the Dark*; and in *A Kingdom By The Sea*, Vadimovich has written a sort of cheesecake *Lolita* in which, in the words of the blurb on the Formosan paperback edition:

> Bertram, an unbalanced youth, doomed to die shortly in an asylum for the criminally insane, sells for ten dollars his ten-year-old sister Ginny to the middle-aged bachelor Al Garden, a wealthy poet who travels with the beautiful child from resort to resort through America and other countries. A state of affairs that looks at first blush—and "blush" is the right word—like a case of irresponsible perversion (described in brilliant detail never attempted before) develops by the grees [*misprint*] into a genuine dialogue of tender love. Garden's feelings are reciprocated by Ginny, the initial "victim" who at eighteen, a normal nymph, marries him in a warmly described religious ceremony. All seems to end honky-donky [*sic!*] in foreverlasting bliss of a sort fit to meet the sexual demands of the most rigid, or frigid, humanitarian. . . .
>
> (Interpolations by V. Vadimovich)

On a plane flight from Moscow to Paris, Vadimovich's neighbour points at *A Kingdom By The*

[2] *Look At The Harlequins!* By VLADIMIR NABOKOV. Weidenfeld, £3.25.

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Sea and calls it "this obscene novelette about little Lola or Lotte, whom some Austrian Jew or reformed pederast rapes after murdering her mother." "You are mistaken. You are a somber imbecile", says Vadimovich. "You are talking of some other book altogether."

Indeed, Vadimovich is a cheesecake Nabokov and his life, similarly coarsened, sentimentalised and misprinted, tracks *Speak, Memory* just as *A Kingdom By The Sea* tracks *Lolita. Look at The Harlequins!* even has a happy ending of sorts, with Vadimovich, paralysed by a stroke, being pushed along contentedly (or is he dead?) in his wheelchair by his fourth wife, a grown-up nymphet, born on the same day as his daughter, on whom the character of Ginny in *A Kingdom By The Sea* was modelled. In *Look At The Harlequins!* everything and everybody is a version, a translation, a shadow of something or somebody else.

Thus far, Nabokov is doing no more than rattling the customary small change of his fiction and horsing with familiar ultimacies. But in the novel, all is so deeply rooted in the character of Vadimovich himself that the tricks, games and speculations which Nabokov has tended to leave strewn over the surface of his books are more deeply absorbed into this one than perhaps they have ever been before. Vadimovich, by taking leave of Russia, is at home nowhere. His English is a shaky blend of grammarian's pedantry and miscued slang. The Russian in his head is a rusty treasure trove. The language of the novel is itself homeless, displaced—a hyperactive mongrel of English, French and Russian.

THERE IS HARDLY a paragraph in the book which does not expose some humiliating embarrassment caused by misunderstanding and mistranslation. One of the sad crew of White Russian literary émigrés (and *Look At The Harlequins!* is enormously strong on that gloomy society of D.P.'s in Paris and the United States) renders "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" into a Russian sentence meaning "A pretty bauble always gladdens us." Life cheapens irremediably in translation, and Vadimovich is condemned to life in a state of perpetual translatorese, by turns mistaking and mistaken. He is impervious to the sneers he receives from people around him because he usually fails to understand them, or takes them for oblique compliments; and Nabokov is marvellous at making the reader wince with shame for Vadimovich while Vadimovich himself blusters innocently through a thicket of condescending insults.

Correspondingly, Vadimovich's own sensitivities are incommunicable, locked inside the rhino-hide of his immense ego. The writing for which he lives—the blessed transformation of life into art, into harlequins—is, as Nabokov cunningly reveals, paltry stuff. But it is unnervingly close to Nabokov's own fiction. *Look At The Harlequins!* is flooded by a kind of experimental doubt; reading it is like watching a priest teasing himself with the seeds of his own atheism. Early on in the book, we are introduced to a parrot called Mata Hari who has a vocabulary of three words: "*allō*", "Otto" and "pa-pa." "Sometimes", says Vadimovich,

> when I work too late and the spies of thought cease to relay messages, a wrong word in motion feels somehow like the dry biscuit that a parrot holds in its great slow hand.

That image casts a long shadow over the novel. Like the parrot shrieking in its cage, the novelist sits inside his book, his art turning to dry biscuits, his language into meaningless mimicry.

For in Nabokov as in Joyce, art and exile are coupled notions. Vadimovich flees from Russia—and from life—into the consolations of making phrases. *Look At The Harlequins!* reveals him to be no more at home in literature than he is in Paris or at the ghastly University of Quirn. His

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wives and his child, each one a corrupt translation of another, are dim shadows on the walls of his empty cave of language. And at the end the terrible, jealous vacancy of his life distils into a senile babble about being brought rum with his tea—the final vengeance of the world of the commonplace. Perhaps the book really is a requiem for a dead parrot.

It is undoubtedly fired by something blacker and more troubled than one is used to in Nabokov's novels. In his afterword to *Lolita* he said that that book had been touched off by reading a newspaper story about an ape which, given paints and paper, could only portray the bars of its cage. That poor monkey has never been far away in all Nabokov's books, but it has been usually regarded with knowing gloom. Here it is contemplated with something very like despair. Even his beloved butterflies seem to have lost their charm in *Look At The Harlequins!* —they are dead, but their wings still flutter from the twitch of a convulsive nerve after their thoraxes have been squeezed. "One pinch is enough", says their captor smugly. Vadimovich, paralysed by a seizure of the heart, is a pinched butterfly himself, and Nabokov seems unhappy to find himself in possession of such a disturbingly recognisable trophy. By the end of the book, the title, now abbreviated to LATH like an entry in a dusty bibliography, has changed from a promise and an invitation to a mocking jeer.

BRITISH WRITING IS so habitually dependent on social poise and tone, on knowing, usually rather too precisely, what can be taken for granted, that we tend to be more astonished than perhaps we should be at the appearance of an English writer who takes nothing for granted. Every so often someone comes along whose prose style is so alert and fresh, so remote from the mainstream idiom of English social fiction, that it seems miraculous that they should be able to write like that and be British too. Jean Rhys is such a writer, though her West Indian background has helped to exile her from the fatal knowingness that goes with being English. Ian McEwan is another. His first collection of stories, *First Love, Last Rites*,[3] oozes with talent as wayward, original and firm in vision as anything since Miss Rhys's early novels about being alone and young in Paris and London.

McEwan's characters are adolescents; they bristle with the sudden violent consciousness of selfhood like hatching pupae. Or they are children, prematurely burdened with egos that give them the wizened gravity of infants in Renaissance paintings. Or they are men whose bodies have grown but whose minds have never broken free of the appalling second womb of puberty. Cruelty comes easily to them: they can wound or kill with the offhand grace of animals for whom the self is the only reality. They are profoundly disturbed by their own capacity to love another, which creeps up on them from behind like a pad-footed intruder on their barred and bolted rooms. They are endlessly curious about the world, but their curiosity has the roving neutrality of creatures in a zoo, unsure of what to focus on. They belong to no society. They are alarmingly in touch with blood and slime.

In the title story of *First Love, Last Rites*, two teenagers copulate through a Norfolk summer while a rat steadily scratches its way towards them from behind the skirting-board of their room. The boy goes eel-fishing with the girl's father, while her younger brother, a playful rat himself, invades the room, furious at his sister's departure from childhood into an inaccessible sexuality. These separate elements—the love-making, the rat, the eels, the child—are woven by McEwan into a miniature symphony which mounts in pace and volume to a conclusion that is at once natural and tender, and appalling.

[3] *First Love, Last Rites*. By IAN MCEWAN. Cape, £2.50.

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But the great strength of McEwan's writing is that it is constitutionally incapable of being appalled. Taking nothing for granted, it is surprised by nothing and observant of everything. His style is wonderfully supple, open to experience, and certain in its movements. At its frequent best, it has a musical purity matched to music's deep indifference to the merely moral. McEwan's narrators are—in the world's terms—an unsavoury crew . . . child-murderers, emotional cripples, brutally self-centred teenagers. Most of his characters are amply qualified for permanent residence in a prison or asylum. Yet they are all granted a Mozartian lucidity, a gift of clarity which turns them into angels despite the weight of the world's disapproval.

In "Solid Geometry" (its previous publication both in the pulp sci-fi mag, *Amazing Stories*, and in *The New Review* suggests something of McEwan's unplaceability as a writer) a man discovers how to make his wife disappear. Following a sequence of diagrams in his great-grandfather's diary, he persuades her that he has found a new love-making position, then folds up her naked body, turns the shape inside out, and she's gone. Just on the level of anecdote—the only level that most science fiction ever aspires to—the story is satisfyingly ingenious. What lifts it way above science fiction is the tone of the narration and its steady movement from inquisitive scientific cool to the wonder and joy of the experimenter at the moment of discovery. Yet Maisie, the wife, is such a thoroughly explored and observed character in her own right that the story has to win her disappearance by enlisting the reader as an accomplice to an outrageous act. It does so brilliantly, and in the process it teaches a dark truth about the abundant innocence of what is usually called evil.

McEWAN DOES PAY occasional penalties for being so confidently *sui generis*. Idiomatic writers are able to rely on the established standards of their idioms, but McEwan (and he shares this with Jean Rhys, too) sometimes lurches, apparently unconsciously, into stretches of bathos and carelessness. The first story in the book, "Homemade", is too close for its own comfort to "Whacking Off" in *Portnoy's Complaint*. And one story, "Cocker At The Theatre", is hardly more than an extended snigger. But these are niggles. *First Love, Last Rites* is one of those rare books which strike out on a new direction in current English fiction. The most important question is what will McEwan do next? His abilities as a stylist and a storyteller are profuse, and these stories are only the first harvest.

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Dislocations & Declensions

Recent Poetry—By DOUGLAS DUNN

A DELIBERATELY FORMED and careful poetry, more or less traditional, should not necessarily be one in which skill looks like willed attenuation. Yet there is something of exactly that in Peter Scupham's *Prehistories*.[1] His first collection, *The Snowing Globe*, had rather more of that sort of weakness; indeed, Scupham has grown considerably in the intervening few years. His remarkable turns of phrase are complemented by the more important knack of being able to guide a poem through perceptions and densities towards a sense of the poem having been completed.

Excellent powers of organisation—while remaining excellent—can sometimes leave an impression of writing which is peculiarly deliberate. But shouldn't poets exercise more than just a little deliberation? The true answer, I fear, wavers between Yes and Perhaps. The trouble is that some readers insist on the appearance of work having been done on a poem before they admit it worthy of attention. Metre and rhyme are two of the signs such readers look for first. But if there are several styles, a wide variety of understandings of "technique", as is certainly the case, the subject becomes problematic and controversial. "Sound", for instance, appears to have been raised as an alternative critical term for the "music" of rhyme and metre. How best to end a line is a question thought derisory in some camps. Better appreciation might be possible if it is upheld—and it seems to me obvious—that technique is simply what is undertaken in order for a poet to win access to his imagination, and express it with fidelity.

Mr Scupham is an imaginative poet, though of the "archaeological" sort. He observes nature and understands history for the purpose of evoking their ghosts. *Genius loci* is almost always of the past. He is a delver, digger, sifter of dusts and memories. "Ghosts are a poet's working capital", he writes, more importunate here than is typical of him. Unfortunately, some of his diction is ghostly, too. "Palimpsest", "talisman", "salamander days", "adrowse", "rubricates", while, in their archaic associations, part of his intentions in the book as a whole, are probably what Pound meant by "crepuscular", or "slither." Expressions like "hugger-mugger", "flim-flam", and "pother" are too polite, no more than drawing-room onomatopoeia.

IF THESE EXAMPLES of Mr Scupham's diction suggest preciosity, there are poems that virtually contradict that side of his creativity, over-fond of the untenably mellifluous and words that themselves appear like revenants. A series about the four elements, "Behind the Figures", is harsher, tighter, and, with the exception of "salamander days", his lines here are awake to a sound of language less submerged in convention.

> *Worms cast out*
> *Their whorled pyramids:*
> *Dumb signatures,*

shows his cute, and acute, invention through seeing. The short three-line verse, however, makes intensity of sound easier to come by, and, more important, helps him transcend the usual, comfortable level of life in which, for all his ghost-hunting, his imagination lives. When he writes,

> *In echoing cadences of green slow-motion,*
> *We celebrate the ancient mysteries:*
>
> *Combers for lost gold in a lodge of sand,*
> *Amazed discoverers of our buried selves,*

the neatness of the lines withholds attention from anything even mildly turbulent or obsessive, although that does seem to be what Scupham is attempting to reach. His language, and its order, gives the impression of subjects having been tamed. His work sometimes reads like that of a sensitive survivor of the Famous Five who's taken up verse.

Count Keyserling, in his chapter on England in his book *Europe*, asked "What is it that is incomprehensible about these islanders?" His answer is worth attending to:

[1] *Prehistories*. By PETER SCUPHAM. Oxford University Press, £1.95.

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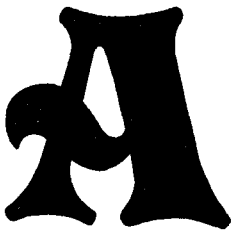

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> It is the particular adjustment of their psyche—the only one of its kind in Europe. With them the emphasis lies not on the conscious, but on the unconscious. It is not intelligence, but instinct—rising at its highest to intuition—which determines the course of their lives. . . . The English live only through the spontaneous unconscious, and consequently the basic function through which they achieve their goal is . . . the imagination.

Mr Scupham, like so many contemporary poets, has failed to allow technique to be formed by instinct and imagination to anything like the degree with which these faculties inform his choice of subject. What is native and resolute in British culture—Imagination—has been under attack. "Tradition" is misunderstood, less thought of as the continuing substance of poetry and more as a key-word to be applied to prosody and technique. Common sense, average opinions, conventional positions in relation to what constitutes the nature of a contemporary poetry—indeed, we are being sold short by refusals to indulge in a use of the powers of imagination which are characteristic of our nationality.

"IGNORANT OF anything/beyond the ache of mammal and clay", says Roger Garfitt[2] in his poem "Animula." While it may look primitive to assert intuition so boldly, Garfitt's credo covers almost everything. Later in the same poem, he says:

> *for you are mineral in a moth's wing,*
> *rain in the wind or air in the bone,*
>
> *you are swift and lark; in the you the elder*
> *seasons move, from flower to berry,*
> *and the north meets the westron wind.*

Close as he often is to Scupham's occasional indulgences in a mystical parlance, Garfitt is altogether less decorative. Indeed, he could do with some of Scupham's ability to shape a poem.

Mr Garfitt attempts the same historical transcendence as Peter Scupham. A good example is " 'B' Roads." By the end of the poem, Garfitt says they come "to quiet conclusions",

> *They turn to history*
>
> *in the* striae *of the Ice Age*
> *find lasting company,*
> *their heroes in the dead stars.*

Mighty periods of alteration in culture often begin with re-examinations and new perspectives on the past: the Renaissance, Augustanism, Romanticism, Modernism—each rediscovered antiquity in a new light, or found sustenance in more recent periods as well as making topical rejections of the art of immediate predecessors. No sweeping re-inventions of that magnitude appear called for now; indeed, they may be impossible to make. Instead, poets such as Scupham and Garfitt assume a role of spiritual cosmologist, finding no truth in the past that could be of help, merely a disappearance, a space, and an endlessness. "Declensions" and "dislocations" are two of the words Mr Scupham uses to suggest what makes such trailings off to the dark backward possible. And, lacking precise social information in their poems, they write paeans to be sung on the day before the end of the world.

Scupham's nature, for instance, is a torn landscape harrowed by "yellow machines." It also contains shards, ghosts, and sundry skulls. The expertly presented image which ends "Welwyn" has an ambivalent nostalgia for what I can only describe as "something or other":

> *A new imperium holds, where scholars came*
> *To grub for broken Rome with hasty fingers.*

The pertinence of these lines may be local; but they lead me to think Mr Scupham is aware of the intellectual necessity of a fresh perspective on the past, a synthesis, for which finger-scraping for broken artefacts is only its pathetic substitute.

Nature in Garfitt's poems is more closely nourished by observation than sentiments of history. He has poems called "Hares Boxing", "Spring Grazing", and "On Gangsdown Hill", which suggest a certain self-consciousness as "nature poet." "Carnage" is an example of the contemporary set-piece nature poem, about an animal—"remnants of fur"—butchered on the A40. At the other extreme, he can be urban, though in the poems for Shelter his conscience seems a shade programmatic. His potential, however, is considerable.

[2] *West of Elm.* By ROGER GARFITT. Carcanet Press, £2.

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IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN the fact of poetry in English that it is composed by line; the sanctity of the line might even be the primary technical consideration for a British poet. This has meant, and still means, that considerable skill is needed to keep a poem on the move without stops and starts, without short jabs of imagination. David Grubb's[3] imagination, for instance, is clearly one which requires space:

In the white room you forget the future; present and past
come together like tired old professors; they sit down in the
white room and wonder how they cannot see the deaths of others.
Unanswered questions turn to snow.

Technically, Grubb's writing looks awkward. "The White Room" cries out to be a prose-poem, a disreputable form in English though there is no real reason why it should be. He could dispense with lines altogether and still write poems. They would be prose-poems, but they would still be poems. As it is, his line-breaks are virtually random.

DAVID SELZER'S "elsewheres"[4] are harder of mind and wit than most. His gift is for historical irony, and though this is relied on so heavily as to give the book as a whole a dauntingly cynical tone, it has the compensating effect of ensuring that the other times and other places of his imagination are never insubstantial, or the products of a defeatist or juvenile longing. His choice of materials also deserves the clinically ironic treatment to which he subjects them.

Small-talk on the lawn—poems,
property, marriage.

The cunning fluency is characteristic. At the same time, he is too reliant on insights to offer much more in his ways of writing than what appears a tentative formality. It's what he *says* in his poems, the points he makes, ironically elicited, that make them survive. His language is little more than an "adequate" use of words; and he runs the risk of appearing to be a poet who cannot devise a properly sensuous language, or who prevents himself from doing so, as if absolving himself from the demands of artistry. Embodying ironic pictures in words, in a way that makes them available as ironic, calls for cleverness more than a poetic invention in language. It does seem a mode of writing Selzer might realise can be taken too far.

A mauve haze fills the quarries
strikes and Sundays emptied.

"Elsewhere is metaphor", he writes. Without closer attention to the sound of words, however, Selzer's cerebrally defined poems look imperfect. It is a pity. He has imagination and profundity of insight. Indeed, his oddly belligerent ironies, his acute intelligence, are matched among younger poets only by Tony Harrison's. If he can apply his imagination to the forms of verse as well as its substance, Selzer could write keen and exceptional poems.

AN INVALID for over nine years, and hence obliged to observe and imagine the natural world from a perspective of withdrawal, Molly Holden's poems are understandably informed by pain. When her personal misfortune is either fully absorbed in a poem, or overcome by immersion in what she observes, she can write a nature poetry solidly imitative of all that's best in that enduring English *genre*. "Clover", "Green Ganger", and "Elm Felling, 1973" are three examples in her new book.

These three poems are also short, and short-lined; they are rhythmic, and give the impression of her practice within this kind of poem being certain. But the characteristic poem in *The Country Over*[5] is longer, broader, baggier. This relaxed form of writing encourages little more than a language that's *enough*; without a few surprise phrases, a quirk of cadence, a poem like "Crowle, Tibberton, etc" reads like prose. Properly arranged as prose, extended, with more room for description and anecdote, her report on the old and new inhabitants of rural villages would have been interesting.

On June evenings, the white-shirt-sleeved executive mowing his tidy-outlined lawn with the latest power machine, pauses occasionally, wishes to make conversation with his neighbour but feels—
no, not excluded nor rebuffed—unnecessarily garrulous

is an example. There were fewer lapses of strength in her previous collection, and hardly any in her first, *To Make Me Grieve*. If the boundaries between prose and poetry are, in the hands of the imaginative, detectable in only elementary visible ways, a writer like Molly Holden, whose excellence has always lain in short, traditionally English lyrics, ought to be careful of crossing them.

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[3] *From the White Room*. By DAVID H. W. GRUBB. Rondo Publications Ltd. (155/157 The Albany, Old Hall Street, Liverpool L3 9EG), £1.50.

[4] *Elsewhere*. By DAVID SELZER. E. J. Morten (4–6 Warburton Street, Didsbury, Manchester 20), £1.25.

[5] *The Country Over*. By MOLLY HOLDEN. Chatto & Windus, £1.50.

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Berlin

BLACK COMEDY: An angry and adamant Tennessee Williams telephoned his German agent in Berlin to "fight the matter through to the finish. . . . " And the Verlag Kiepenheuer did so. Last week the Berlin State Court decided that the Freie Volksbuehne Theater could no longer be allowed to perform its version of "A Streetcar Named Desire" (Endstation Sehnsucht). The local director had shortened the text and cast the role of Stanley Kovalski (made famous by Marlon Brando's "Polack" impersonation) with a Negro "in order to sharpen the relevance of the play for our time. . . . " The Verlag, under instructions from Tennessee Williams, consented to no compromise. The Theatre had offered to perform the play with its black Kovalski-star "made up in a white face" and wearing a straight-haired, non-kinky wig.

DER SPIEGEL

Strasbourg

NON-LANGUAGE: *A surprise to your readers were the remarks on "la francophonie" by M. Jacques Chirac and "Le Monde's" adjoining commentary. There are the usual contradictions between liberal professions of regional rights and the absolute priority given to national unity. But what is the language referred to as "*l'alsacien*"? Alsatian is surely a very bad translation of "*elsaesserdeutsch*" which is a corresponding regional form for "*schweizerdeutsch.*" Nowadays the emphasis is usually put on how different the Alsace-Lorraine dialect—"alemanique" or "francique"—is from German. There's little real point to that. The German literary language, so-called "hochdeutsch", allows for other regional dialects, for example, in Bavaria. A century-and-a-half ago, when Professor Reuss of Strasbourg University made his famous protest against the first "Frenchifying" methods in the schools, the call read: "*WIR REDEN DEUTSCH*" and not: "Nous parlons alsacien."*

*Albert Schweitzer, whose centenary we have been celebrating here in Strasbourg, was not "*un écrivain alsacien*" but a writer in the German language, and a very good one: perhaps the very best we have had in Alsace since Sebastian Brant and his "*Narrenschiff *(Ship of Fools)."*

How will the use of wrong words which create only false issues ever help us face our problems?

LE MONDE

London

MELODRAMA: Newspapers vie with each other to see which can use the words most redolent of conflict. Thus in yesterday's report of Britain's retaliation against Ugandan provocation, we had: "Jim trades punches with Amin" (*Daily Express*); "Britain slapped back at Uganda's President . . ." (*Daily Mirror*); "Britain got tough with Uganda's President . . ." (*The Sun*); "A bitter tit-for-tat row . . . President Idi Amin so infuriated the Foreign Office . . ." (*Daily Mail*).

None is an exact or even a very helpful description of what happened, but it is how the newspapers believe their readers like the news presented. Auberon Waugh best summed up the dilemma which is always facing reporters and newspaper executives: "The truth is mostly extremely boring."

THE TIMES

London

BIBLE STORIES: *More than a thousand languages in which the Bible is translated are collected in "The Book of a Thousand Tongues," now published by the United Bible Societies.*

The languages included cover at least 97 per cent. of the world's population. In all 1,399 languages in which some part of the Bible has been translated are listed.

Twenty-three English dialects, now in disuse, are in the list including those of Lancashire, Cornwall, Devon and Northumberland. In the "Daughters of Zion" passage from the "Song of Solomon" broad Northumberland prefers "wimmen" to "daughters."

After years in which only European and American interpretations of Biblical material have been available, some distinctly African versions of New Testament parables are being produced for Swaziland. Among those stories which have been changed is the parable of the Prodigal Son, which will be available in SiSwati, the local language.

The World Association for Christian Communication tell me a mother has been introduced to this parable. "No Swazi father can give away a portion of the family inheritance without consulting his wife", they explain.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Derry

LONG-HAIRED BARBER: A Council for the Arts in South Derry, set up last month, has already run into trouble with Magherafelt (Co. Derry) District Council over choosing the opera, "The Barber of Seville", for its first promotion.

When it wrote asking the council to underwrite a guarantee of £75.00 for the production, which is scheduled to be held in Magherafelt in September, Mr Aidan Larkin, Assemblyman for Mid-Ulster, said that anyone able to sit through such a heavy production would be a hero. When they had such a wealth of local talent in Northern Ireland, he was at a loss to know why they should import this Italian opera.

He said they should not give the group a guarantee for a production of this kind, "to suit the bourgeois middle-class culture of the fur coat brigade."

IRISH TIMES

Washington D.C.

E FOR EFFORT: *A commemorative centenary dinner on the occasion of Sir Winston Churchill's birthday was held at the British Embassy who shared the sponsorship with the Woodrow Wilson Centre for Scholars of the Smithsonian Institution. The Embassy was left to agonise over the invitations. To Churchill's certain wrath over spelling they had invited everyone to a "centenery."*

THE TIMES

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Leszek Kolakowski: "My Correct

IN A REVIEW of the last issue of *The Socialist Register* by Raymond Williams, I read that your letter is one of the best pieces of Left writings in the last decade, which implies directly that all or nearly all the rest was worse. He knows better and I take his word. I should be proud to having occasioned, to a certain degree, this text, even if I happen to be its target. And so, my first reaction is one of gratitude.

My second reaction is of *embarras de richesses*. You will excuse me if I make a fair choice of topics in my reply to your 100 pages of the Open Letter. I will try to take up the most controversial ones. I do not think I should comment on the autobiographical pages, interesting though they are. When you say, *e.g.* that you do not go to Spain for holidays, that you never attend a conference of Socialists without paying a part of the costs out of your own pocket, that you do not participate in meetings funded by the Ford Foundation, that you are like Quakers of old who refused to take off their hats before authorities, etc., I do not think it advisable to reply with a virtue-list of my own; this list would probably be less impressive. Neither am I going to exchange the story of your dismissal from the *New Left Review* for all the stories of my expulsions from different editorial committees of different journals; these stories would be rather trivial.

My third reaction is of sadness, and I mean it. Incompetent though I am in your field of studies, I know your reputation as a scholar and historian and I found it regrettable to see in your Letter so many Leftist clichés which survive in speech and print owing to three devices: first, the refusal to analyse words and the use of verbal hybrids purposely designed to confound the issues; second, the use of moral and sentimental standards in some cases and of political and historical standards in other similar cases; third, the refusal to accept historical facts as they are. I will try to say more precisely what I mean.

THESE *are excerpts from Leszek Kolakowski's long reply in the latest number of "The Socialist Register" (1974) to E. P. Thompson's 100-page Open Letter. (For some reason best known to themselves the editors chose to publish Kolakowski's manuscript as "a tragic document.")*

Among Professor Kolakowski's contributions to ENCOUNTER *are "Can the Devil be Saved?" (July 1974) and "Intellectuals, Hope, and Heresy: An Interview" (October 1971); it was some remarks on the New Left in the latter which evidently prompted Thompson's polemic.*

YOUR LETTER CONTAINS *some personal grievances and some arguments on general questions. I will start with a minor personal grievance. Oddly enough, you seem to feel offended by not having been invited to the Reading conference [see: Kolakowski, with Stuart Hampshire,* The Idea of Socialism, *just published by Weidenfeld], and you state that if you had been invited you would have refused to attend anyway, on serious moral grounds. I presume consequently, that if you had been invited, you would have felt offended as well and so, no way out of hurting you was open to the organisers. Now, the moral ground you cite is the fact that in the organising Committee you found the name of Robert Cecil. And what is sinister about Robert Cecil is that he once worked in the British diplomatic service. And so your integrity does not allow you to sit at the same table with someone who used to work in British diplomacy.*

O, blessed Innocence! You and I, we were both active in our respective Communist Parties in the 1940s and 1950s: which means that, whatever our noble intentions and our charming ignorance (or refusal to get rid of ignorance) were, we supported within our modest means, a régime based on mass slave labour and police terror of the worst kind in human history. Do you not think that there are many people who could refuse to sit at the same table with us on this ground? No, you are innocent, while I do not feel, as you put it, the "sense of the politics of those years" when so many Western intellectuals were converted to Stalinism.

YOUR "SENSE OF POLITICS OF THOSE YEARS" *is obviously subtler and more differentiated than mine, I gather this from your casual comments on Stalinism. First, you say, that a part (a part, I do not omit that) of responsibility for Stalinism lies upon the Western powers. You say, second, that "to a historian, fifty years is too short a time in which to judge a new social system, if such a system is arising." Third, we know, as you say, "times when communism has shown a most human face, between 1917 and the early 1920s and again from the battle of Stalingrad to 1946."*

Everything is right on some additional assumptions. Obviously, in the world in which we live, important events in one country are usually to be credited in part to what happened in other countries. You will certainly not deny that a part of the responsibility for German Nazism lay upon the Soviet Union; I wonder how this affects your judgment on German Nazism?

And what is fifty years to a historian? Fifty years covering the life of an obscure Russian worker Marchenko or of a still more obscure Lithuanian student who has not even written a book? Let us not hurry with judging a "new social system." Certainly I could ask you how many years you

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needed to assess the merits of the new military régime in Chile or in Greece. But I know your answer: no analogy. Chile and Greece remain within capitalism (factories are privately owned) while Russia started a new "alternative society" (factories are state-owned, and so is land, and so are all its inhabitants). As genuine historians we can wait for another century and keep our slightly melancholic but cautiously optimistic historical wisdom.

NOT SO. OF COURSE, **with "that beast", "that old bitch, consumer capitalism" (your words). Wherever we look, our blood is boiling. Here we may afford to be ardent moralists again and we can prove—as you do—that the capitalist system has a "logic" of its own that all reforms are unable to cancel. You do not say that all reforms are doomed to failure: you only explain that as long as reforms do not destroy capitalism, capitalism is not destroyed, which is certainly true. And you propose "a peaceful revolutionary transition to an alternative socialist logic." You think apparently that this makes perfectly clear what you mean. I think, on the contrary, that it is perfectly obscure unless, again, you imagine that once the total state ownership of factories is granted, there remain only minor technical problems on the road to your utopia. But this is precisely what remains to be proved, and the** *onus probandi* **lies on those who maintain that these (insignificant "to a historian") fifty years of experience may be discarded by the authors of the new blueprint for the socialist society. (In Russia there were "exceptional circumstances", weren't there? But is there nothing exceptional about Western Europe?)**

YOUR WAY OF INTERPRETING *these modest fifty years (fifty-seven now) of the new alternative society is revealed as well in your occasional remarks about the "most human face of communism" between 1917 and the early '20s and between Stalingrad and 1946.*

What do you mean by "human face" in the first case? The attempt to rule the entire economy by police and army, resulting in mass hunger with uncountable victims, in several hundred peasants' revolts, all drowned in blood (a total economic disaster, as Lenin would admit later, after having killed and imprisoned an indefinite number of Mensheviks and SRs for predicting precisely that)? Or do you mean the armed invasion of seven non-Russian countries which had formed their independent governments, some socialist, some not (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia—O God, where are all these curious tribes living?)? Or do you mean the dispersion by soldiers of the only democratically-elected Parliament in Russian history, before it could utter one single word? The suppression by violence of all political parties, including socialist ones, the abolition of the non-Bolshevik press and, above all, the replacement of law with the absolute power of the party and its police in killing, torturing and imprisoning anybody they wanted? The mass repression of the Church? The Kronstadt uprising?

And what is the most human face in 1942–46? Do you mean the deportation of eight entire nationalities of the Soviet Union with hundreds of thousands of victims (let us say seven, not eight, one was deported shortly before Stalingrad)? Do you mean sending to concentration camps hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners-of-war handed over by the Allies? Do you mean the so-called "collectivisation" of the Baltic countries (if you have any idea about the reality of this word)?

I HAVE THREE POSSIBLE *explanations of your statement. First, that you are simply ignorant of these facts; this I find incredible, considering your profession as historian. Second, that you use the word "human face" in a very Thompsonian sense which I do not grasp. Third, that you (not unlike most of both orthodox and critical communists) believe that everything is all right in the Communist system as long as the leaders of the Party are not murdered. This is, in fact, the standard way of how communists become "critical"—when they realise that the new alternative socialist logic does not spare the communists themselves and, in particular, Party leaders. Did you notice that the only victims Khrushchev mentioned by name in his speech of 1956 (whose importance I am far from underestimating) were the Stalinists* pur sang *like himself, most of them (like Postyshev) hangmen of merit with uncountable crimes committed before they became victims themselves? Did you notice, in memoirs or critical analyses written by many ex-communists (I will not quote names, excuse me) that their horror only suddenly emerged when they saw communists being slaughtered? They always are pleading the innocence of the victims by saying "But these people were communists"! Which incidentally, is a self-defeating way of defence, for it suggests that there is nothing wrong in slaughtering non-communists. And this implies that there is an authority to decide who is and who is not a communist, and this authority can be only the same rulers who keep the gun; consequently, the slaughtered are by definition non-communists and everything is all right.*

WELL, THOMPSON, **I really do not attribute to you this way of thinking. Still I cannot help noticing your use of double standards of evaluation. And when I say "double standards" I do not mean indulgence for the justifiable inexperience of the "new society" in coping with new problems. I mean the use, alternatively, of political or moral standards to similar situations, and this I find unjustifiable. We must not be fervent moralists in some cases and Real-politikers or philosophers of world history in others, depending on political circumstances. This is a point I would like to make clear to you if we are to understand each other.**

I will quote to you a talk with a Latin-American revolutionary who told me about torture in Brazil. I asked: "What is wrong with torture?" He said:

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"What do you mean? Do you suggest it is all right? Are you justifying torture?" And I said: "On the contrary, I simply ask if you think that torture is a morally inadmissible monstrosity." "Of course," he replied. "And so is torture in Cuba?", I asked. "Well" he answered, "this is another thing. Cuba is a small country under the constant threat of American imperialists. They have to use all means of self-defence, however regrettable."

Then I said: "Now, you cannot have it both ways. If you believe, as I do, that torture is abominable and inadmissible on moral grounds, it is such, by definition, in all circumstances. If however there are circumstances where it can be tolerated, you can condemn no régime for the very fact of applying torture, since you assume that there is nothing essentially wrong with torture itself. Either you condemn torture in Cuba in exactly the same way you do in Brazil, or you prevent yourself from condemning the Brazilian police for the very fact of torturing people. In fact, you cannot condemn torture on political grounds, because in most cases it is perfectly efficient and the torturers get what they want. You can condemn it only on moral grounds and then, necessarily, everywhere in the same way, in Batista's Cuba or in Castro's Cuba, in North Vietnam and in South Vietnam."

This is a banal but important point which I hope is clear to you. I simply refuse to join people who show how their hearts are bleeding to death when they hear about any, big or minor (and rightly condemnable), injustice in the U.S.A. and suddenly become wise historiosophists or cool rationalists when told about worse horrors of the new alternative society.

This is one, but not the only one, reason of the spontaneous and almost universal mistrust people from Eastern Europe nourish towards the Western New Left. . . .

YOU CONSIDER *the existing socialist states as (imperfect, to be sure) beginnings of a new and better social order, as transitional forms which went beyond capitalism and are heading towards utopia. I do not deny that this form is new, but I do deny that it is in any respect superior to the democratic countries of Europe and I defy you to prove the opposite,* i.e. *to show a point in which the existing socialism may claim its superiority, except for the notorious advantages all despotic systems have over democratic ones (less trouble with people). The second, and equally important, point is that you pretend to know what democratic socialism means to you and you do not know. You write: "My own utopia, two hundred years ahead, would not be like Morris's 'epoch of rest.' It would be a world (as D. H. Lawrence would have it) where the 'money values' give way before the 'life values', or (as Blake would have it) 'corporeal' will give way to 'mental' war. With sources of power easily available, some men and women might choose to live in unified communities, sited, like Cistercian monasteries, in centres of great natural beauty, where agricultural, industrial and intellectual pursuits might be combined. Others might prefer the variety and pace of an urban life which rediscovers some of the qualities of the city-state. Others will prefer a life of seclusion, and many will pass between all three. Scholars would follow the disputes of different schools, in Paris, Jakarta, or Bogota."*

This is a very good sample of socialist writing. It amounts to saying that the world should be good, and not bad; and I am entirely on your side on this issue. I share without restrictions your (and Marx's, and Shakespeare's, and many others') analysis to the effect that it is very deplorable that people's minds are occupied with the endless pursuit of money, that needs have a magic power of infinite growth, and that the profit motive, instead of use-value, is ruling production. Your superiority consists in that you know exactly how to get rid of all this and I do not. . . .

THE EXPERIENCES *of the "new alternative society" have shown very convincingly that the only universal medicine these people have for social evils—state ownership of the means of production—is not only perfectly compatible with all disasters of the capitalist world, with exploitation, imperialism, pollution, misery, economic waste, national hatred and national oppression, but that it adds to them a series of disasters of its own: inefficiency, lack of economic incentives, and above all, the unrestricted role of the omnipotent bureaucracy, a concentration of power never known before in human history. Just a stroke of bad luck? No, you do not say exactly so, you simply prefer to ignore the problem and rightly so, because all attempts to examine this experience lead us back not only to contingent historical circumstances but to the very idea of socialism and the discovery of incompatible demands hidden in this idea (or at least demands whose compatibility remains to be proved).*

We want a society with a large autonomy of small communities, do we not? And we want central planning in the economy? Let us try to think now how both work together. We want technical progress and we want perfect security for people? Let us look closer how both could be combined. We want industrial democracy and we want efficient management: do they work well together? Of course they do; in the leftist heaven where everything is compatible and everything settled, lamb and lion sleep in the same bed. Look at the horrors of the world and see how easily we can get rid of them once we make a peaceful revolution toward the new socialist logic. The Middle East war and Palestinian grievances? Of course, this is the result of capitalism, just let us make the revolution and the question is settled. Pollution? Of course, no problem at all, just let the new proletarian state take over the factories and no pollution any more. Traffic jams? This is because capitalists do not care a damn about human comfort, just give us power (in fact, this is a rather good point, in socialism we have far fewer cars and correspondingly fewer traffic jams). People die from hunger in India? Of course, American imperialists

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eat their food, but once we make the revolution, etc. Northern Ireland? Demographic problems in Mexico? Racial hatred? Tribal wars? Inflation? Criminality? Corruption? Degradation of educational systems? There is such a simple answer to everything and, moreover, the same answer to everything!

THIS IS NOT A CARICATURE, *not in the slightest. This is a standard pattern of thought of those who have overcome the miserable illusions of reformism and invented the beneficial device for solving all problems of mankind; and this device consists in a few words which, when repeated often enough, start looking as if they had a content: revolution, alternative society, etc. . . .*

YOU ARE RIGHT, EDWARD, **that we, people from Eastern Europe, have a tendency to underestimate the gravity of the social issues democratic societies face and we may be blamed for that. But we cannot be blamed for not taking seriously people who, unable though they are to remember correctly any single fact from our history or to say which barbaric dialect we speak, are perfectly able instead to teach us how liberated we are in the East and who have a rigorously scientific solution for humanity's illness, and this solution consists in repeating a few phrases we could hear for thirty years on each celebration of the 1st of May and read in any party propaganda brochure.**

When I was leaving Poland at the end of 1968 (I had not been in any Western country for at least six years), I had a somewhat vague idea of what the radical student movement and different Leftist groups or parties might be. What I saw and read I found pathetic and disgusting in nearly all (still: not all) cases. I do not shed tears for a few windows smashed in demonstrations; that old bitch, consumer capitalism, will survive it. Neither do I find scandalous the rather natural ignorance of young people. What impressed me was mental degradation of a kind I had never seen before in any Leftist movement.

I saw young people trying to "reconstitute" universities and to liberate them from horrifying, savage, monstrous, fascist oppression. The list of demands, with variations, was very similar all over the world of campuses. These fascist pigs of the Establishment want us to pass examinations while we are making the Revolution; let them give all of us A-grades without examinations. Very often there were demands for abolishing altogether some subjects of teaching as irrelevant, *e.g.* foreign languages (these fascists want us, internationalist revolutionaries, to waste time in learning languages, why? to prevent us from making world revolution!).

In one place revolutionary philosophers went on strike because they got a reading list including Plato, Descartes and other bourgeois idiots, instead of relevant great philosophers like Che Guevara and Mao. In another, revolutionary mathematicians pass a motion that the department should organise courses on the social tasks of mathematicians and (this is the point) each student should be able to attend this course as many times as he wanted and each time get credit for it, which meant that he could get the diploma in mathematics for exactly nothing. In still another place, the noble martyrs of the world revolution demanded to be examined only by other students they would choose themselves, and not by these old reactionary pseudo-scholars. Professors should be appointed (by students, of course) according to their political views, students admitted on the same grounds. In several cases in the U.S. the vanguard of the oppressed toiling masses set fire to University libraries (irrelevant pseudo-knowledge of the Establishment). Needless to say, you could hear that there is no difference, no difference at all, between the life in a California campus and a Nazi concentration camp. And all were Marxists, of course, which meant they knew three or four sentences written by Marx or Lenin, in particular the sentence "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways, the point, however, is to change it." (What Marx wanted to say in this sentence, it is obvious to them, was that it made no sense to learn.)

* * *

YOUR PROPOSAL *to define yourself (and myself) by the allegiance to the "Marxist tradition" (as opposed to the system, the method, the heritage) seems to be elusive and vague. I am not sure of the meaning you confer on this attachment unless you simply find it important to be called "Marxist"; but you say you do not. Neither do I. I am not interested at all in being "a Marxist" or in being called so. There are certainly only few people working in the human sciences who would not acknowledge their debt to Marx and I am not one of them. I readily admit that without Marx our thinking about history would be different and in many respects worse than it is. To say this is rather trivial. Still, I think that many important tenets of Marx's doctrine are either false or meaningless or else true only in a very restricted sense. I think that the labour theory of value is a normative device without any explanatory power whatsoever; that none of the well-known general formulae of the historical materialism to be found in Marx's writings is admissible and that this doctrine is valid only in a strongly qualified sense; that his theory of class consciousness is false and that most of his predictions proved to be erroneous.*

If I admit nevertheless to keep thinking in historical (yet not in philosophical) matters, in terms inherited in part from the Marxian legacy, do I accept an allegiance to the Marxist tradition? Only in such a loose sense that the same statement would be equally true when I substitute for "Marxist" —"Christian", or "sceptical", or "empiricist." Without belonging to any political party or sect, to any Church, to any philosophical school, I do not

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deny my debt to Marxism, to Christianity, to sceptical philosophy, to empiricist thought and to a few other traditions (more specifically Eastern and less interesting to you) I have in my background. Neither do I share the horror of "eclecticism" if the opposite of eclecticism is philosophical or political bigotry (as it usually is in the minds of those who terrify us with the label of eclecticism). In such a poor sense, I admit to belonging to the Marxist tradition, among others.

But you seem to imply more. You seem to imply the existence of a "Marxist family" defined by the spiritual descendance from Marx and to invite me to join it. Do you mean that all people who in one way or another call themselves Marxists form a family (never mind that they have been killing each other for half-a-century and still do) opposed as such to the rest of the world? And that this family is for you (and ought to be for me) a place of identification? If this is what you mean, I cannot even say that I refuse to join this family. It simply does not exist in a world where the great Apocalypse can most likely be triggered off by the war between two empires both claiming to be perfect embodiments of Marxism.

WHEN I SAY "SOCIALISM", **I do not mean a state of perfection but rather a movement trying to satisfy demands for equality, freedom and efficiency, a movement that is worth trouble only as far as it is aware not only of the complexity of problems hidden in each of these values separately, but also of the fact that they limit each other and can be implemented only through compromises. We make fools of ourselves and of others if we think (or pretend to think) otherwise. All institutional changes have to be treated entirely as means at the service of these values and not as ends in themselves, and to be judged correspondingly, taking into account the price we pay in one value when we reinforce another one. Attempts to consider any of these three values as absolute and to implement it at all costs not only are bound to destroy two others but they are self-defeating—a discovery of venerable antiquity.**

If I repeat these old truisms this is because they still seem to go unnoticed in utopian thinking; and this is why nothing in the world is easier than writing utopias. I wish we could agree on this point. If we do, we can agree on many others, even after exchanging a few caustic remarks which, I hope, we will be generous enough to forgive each other. Such an agreement will be much less likely if you keep believing that communism was in principle an excellent contrivance, somewhat spoilt in less than excellent application. I hope to have explained to you why, for many years, I have not expected anything from attempts to mend, to renovate, to clean or to correct the communist idea. Alas, poor idea. I knew it well, Edward. That skull will never smile again.

Leszek Kolakowski

LETTERS

"The Case of Dr Rose Dugdale"

I AM WRITING to protest against Tom Mangold's article on Rose Dugdale (ENCOUNTER, February). It is fair enough to express disagreement with Rose's political opinions and to criticise her revolutionary activities, but Tom Mangold's attack upon her is superciliously insensitive

After indicating that Rose's early aspirations were intellectual rather than social Mr Mangold comments, "It remains unclear why Rose went into the social season with such distaste It may have been purely personal; she was not a raving beauty. . . ." Mr Mangold's preferences in feminine beauty are irrelevant—though I cannot help wondering to what extent such remarks are due to Rose's acquisition of a Ph.D. But in expressing his personal opinion in such a context Mr Mangold not only reveals himself as churlish, but makes himself appear ridiculous.

However, Tom Mangold has a rival in Dr Anthony Storr whose comments on Rose's "psychology" he quotes with uncritical acceptance. Dr Storr obviously wants to interpret Rose's choice of thesis topic as proving his theory of her character and this requires him to take rather an unusual view of Wittgenstein. For he tells us that "Wittgenstein is I suppose the most remote from human relationships perhaps of all philosophers", and that Wittgenstein is "the most detached and the most remote of 20th century philosophers." Thus he gives the impression that Rose's choice of subject has sinister implications, whereas in fact there is nothing remarkable about a philosophy student becoming interested in Wittgenstein. Dr Storr seems to be trying to suggest that a healthy political development is incompatible with the study of a subject not directly concerned with "human relations." I dread to think what he would be obliged to deduce from Margaret Thatcher's early career as a research chemist. Psychologists who are interested in people, not as people, but as bugs under a microscope, are not entitled to set themselves up as superior beings.

Tom Mangold also includes several quotations from Mrs Heaton, the wife of Rose's boy-friend Wally. This woman accepted a vast sum of money from Rose. She says that her husband Wally wanted both her and Rose's money. It might also be said that Mrs Heaton wanted both Rose's money and to keep her husband.

Towards the end of his article Tom Mangold mentions that Rose sent him a letter which he describes as "a long, rambling six-page ideological polemic", and remarks that he does not rate it as adding to the literature of revolution. Perhaps he does not appreciate how difficult it is to make any contribution to the development of political thought. It is not an everyday achievement, and even the best philosophers are sometimes emotional and confused. Had Rose pursued an academic career she might have

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been contributing long, rambling ideological polemics to journals such as ENCOUNTER.

CAROL CAMERON

London

MISS CAMERON'S spirited and feminist defence of Rose Dugdale leads her straight into the trap into which, she claims, I have blundered through subjectivity and insensitivity.

The value judgment placed on Rose Dugdale's appearance—"she was not a raving beauty. . . ." is not mine, but belongs to a shrewd assessor of the female flesh—Mary Parker, who has been taking society snaps of women for the last twenty years, and if nothing else knows glamour from glower. Why mention it at all? Well that's pretty obvious, isn't it? Does Miss Cameron believe that Marilyn Monroe's looks were a factor in her tangled life and death? Would any observant journalist have omitted in any report on the shooting of three people last year in an office in Torquay, that the killer was a dwarf? If that sort of information makes the reporter look ridiculous, then so be it.

Nor would one suppose that Miss Cameron's temper would run to any acceptance of Dr Anthony Storr's opinions. Dr Storr's effort was to try to detect symptoms of Rose Dugdale's emotional detachment. These pointers need have nothing directly to do with political ideas or development. They have to do with some sort of answer to the question of why Rose escalated from harmless (and often useful) social acts to hurling bombs on undefended targets from a helicopter. If Miss Cameron believes *that* to be a rational political act, then she must be an enormous fan of full-scale pattern bombing as practised by, say, the Luftwaffe on London, the R.A.F. on Dresden, and the U.S. Air Force on North Viet Nam.

Miss Cameron's remarks about Mrs Wally Heaton are a fine old example of the slur by uninformed innuendo. I do hope Miss Cameron is never charged with preparing the authorised Dugdale biography; or if she is, I hope her publishers have good lawyers.

With her dark glasses still firmly attached in the midnight of her letter, Miss Cameron infers that Rose's letter to me might have been a vital contribution to the development of political thought. She has, of course, not seen it but she is so strong on things she hasn't seen or heard. It really is a long rambling ideological polemic of little, or no interest, at all. Neither I nor the editors of ENCOUNTER could even find a sentence in it worth quoting. Yes indeed, some of the best philosophers are sometimes emotional and confused; but it was not confusion that denied Dr Dugdale her place in the annals of revolutionary literature. It was her immaturity, her platitudes, her clichés, and in the last analysis her sheer inability to inspire anyone else with her fervour.

Perhaps, however, Rose is ahead of her time. Perhaps the seed of her revolution *is* destined to germinate over the years. We shall see. Meanwhile, let's not hold our breath waiting.

MAY I, incidentally, enlarge on your "Author's Note" about me in your February number? You refer to the "extensive research and tape-recorded interviews" on which the Dugdale profile was based, and I should like to record my gratitude to other members of the "Midweek" team—Tom Bower, director, and Claudia Horvath, researcher—on whose work both the BBC programme and my article relied.

TOM MANGOLD

London

Strictly Inter-Personal

IN HIS "Old Furniture and 'Nouvelle Critique'" (February), George Watson purports to quote me as defending intellectual fads on the grounds that they offer possibilities of "inter-personal relationships", which he takes "to be a pompous phrase for friendship." He then proceeds to indulge in a vision of academics "so humanly deprived that they are driven to respect what they know to be merely faddish in a despairing hope of intimacy." Whether Mr Watson intends to be offensive or simply distorts in the hope of constructing an argument, the phrase which prompts his thought does not appear in my *TLS* article, nor is there any talk of friendship. The point I was making is quite simple: that if a lot of people read the same books at the same time (*e.g.* when they are fashionable), there is likely to be much more argument and discussion, a public or "interpersonal intellectual life" rather than one which is purely individual. Fads may create a lively culture.

I find it worth noting that Mr Watson himself now claims to have read extensively in recent French criticism, which he dismisses as a fad, and has even ventured to utter publicly on the subject. It seems that fads have their attractions, even for him; but I should not want to infer from his article that he is humanly deprived; only that he does not always display the intellectual scrupulousness one might expect from a distinguished bibliographer.

JONATHAN CULLER

Brasenose College,
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QUITE RIGHT OF Mr Culler to think my reasons for reading French New Criticism different from his. I don't, as a literary historian, need to find books attractive in order to read them, and would think the study of French academic treatises an absurdly roundabout way of enlarging my circle of acquaintance. And our culture looks lively enough as it is.

We might, though, worry more about truth and less about life, and surprise ourselves to find how lively the truth turned out to be.

GEORGE WATSON

St John's College,
Cambridge

Singapore

I REFER to Jan Morris's article on Singapore in your January issue. It is true that the generals may have been second-rate and the courage less than universal. It is also correct that Singapore fell partly because its defence was inept and possibly timid and partly

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because its rulers did not wish to put at risk the lives of their indigenous subjects. However, the chief reason that Singapore fell was because other Theatres of War were given priority for vital equipment such as tanks, aircraft and various types of artillery and ammunition.

I had the duty of preparing the monthly return of, in Churchill's own words (and for direct transmission to him), "the thirty-six red-hot items" necessary for the defence of Singapore. It was an easy task, being mostly a "Nil return."

I am glad that Jan Morris does not repeat the myth that Singapore was a fortress, but she has started another. It is quite incorrect to say that the Japanese "were exerting their will upon the hapless British more by bluff than superior power." Throughout the campaign the Japanese had complete control of the air and the sea, and the only tanks that were used in the campaign. At the surrender, British ammunition, supplies, food and water were almost exhausted. (The Japanese controlled the reservoir.)

The Japanese shortage, if any, must have been temporary and they had a large uncommitted and fully equipped force in a convoy a few hours' sailing from Singapore. The Japanese got the worst of every set battle right up to the last one at Bukit Timah on Singapore Island but could always bring up reserves and outflank the positions. Japanese officers acknowledged the last two points to prisoners of war.

J. A. C. HILL

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Romanticising the Past

On Student Protest—By JOHN R. SILBER

MICHAEL VANNOY ADAMS [ENCOUNTER, December], clearly condemns a mob's suppression of Professor Samuel Huntington's lecture at the University of Sussex. But to judge from his account of the affair—as well as from his remarks about dissent in the United States—his objection does not grow out of any concern for free speech.

When the friends of free speech hear that a speaker has been howled down by a mob, they will simply maintain that he should not have been silenced. But the enemies of free speech, if they condemn the mob at all, will first ask what the man was trying to say. Mr Adams argues that Professor Huntington did not hold the views attributed to him, and that therefore he would not have made the remarks the mob wanted to suppress. This shows a concern, not that speech be free, but that censorship be cost-effective.

What Huntington thought or would have said is irrelevant to his right to think and say it, except in that only unpopular ideas need to be protected from the attentions of tyrants, whether professional or amateur. It is distressing to feel the need to rehearse these copybook maxims, but they are clearly not being learned by intellectuals, whose stake in their survival is the greatest.

Mr Adams faults the disruption at Sussex University on the grounds that it was frivolous. He contrasts it unfavourably with the protest movement in the United States, which he believes reflected a "realistic appraisal of the situation. By and large, American protesters simply chose appropriate means to achieve limited ends."

It is important to remember just what these "appropriate" means really were. The protesters regularly interfered with the rights of teachers to teach classes and of students to attend them. Frequently they burned down buildings. Sometimes they kidnapped opponents; and, on at least one occasion, one of these idealists murdered a fellow-student by blowing up the building in which he was working. It would be unfair to blame the protest movement for his action—except that at his trial many prominent activists argued that the death was merely an unintended result of a *justified* bombing. But even if we choose to regard the Bombings and the Kidnappings and the Murder as aberrations, we cannot ignore the fact that the protest movement consistently violated the most elementary concepts of academic freedom by denying free expression to any but those preaching the movement's own approved heterodoxies. It continues to do so, albeit in diminishing numbers. It is this destruction of the necessary freedom of the academy that Mr Adams characterises with a euphemism unintentionally reminiscent of Watergate: "appropriate."

He says that the limited ends these appropriate means served were

> President Johnson's retirement, the withdrawal of half-a-million troops, a permanent halt to the bombing, the end of conscription, a more flexible law regarding conscientious objection; and, in some universities, the termination of student military training and secret government research.

This is a mixed list of accomplishments. Mr Adams provides not a word of argument establishing a causal nexus between them and the protest movement. This is not surprising, for the evidence is largely to the contrary.

WHETHER OR NOT the Protest Movement actually led to President Johnson's retirement, the retirement led to the election of Richard M. Nixon, an event that protest also helped along at the 1968 Democratic convention. In this the American movement has much to answer for. Richard Nixon was, at length, the president under whom the withdrawal took place,

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but it is likely that the Protest Movement, far from accelerating, actually allowed Nixon to retard it.

It has been fashionable to claim that revulsion against the tactics of the Chicago police led to converts against the War. This was never more than a sentimental hope. It has now been disproven by the research of Professor Philip Converse of the University of Michigan. Of supporters of immediate withdrawal, half approved of the behaviour of the Chicago police. Of those who disapproved, half thought the force had been insufficient.

In May 1970, the wave of arson and student "strikes" that swept the campuses of America provided a gigantic and distracting sideshow to the main event, the invasion of Cambodia. Without the sideshow, the people of the United States might have more easily fixed their attention on the undeclared war their President was waging against Cambodia, and forced a reluctant Congress to take corrective action.

The claim has also been made that the May 1972 demonstration in Washington was somehow a contribution toward ending the War. But in fact, these large demonstrations were invariably followed by a rise in the public support for Richard Nixon's policy. If one were seeking a classic illustration of the term "*counterproductive*" one could do no better.

On all this, Mr Adams is refuted by an expert. In the margin of a memorandum predicting a noisy and obscene demonstration at an appearance of Richard Nixon, H. R. Haldeman fixed in a single word the administration attitude toward student protest: "*Great!*"

From the campaign against Humphrey forward, Nixon recognised the movement as his unintending ally.

For many Americans the appearance and style of the protesters gave their cause a bad name: for the protesters were peculiarly careless of what Aristotle called "ethical proof." That is, proof that depends upon the audience's estimate of the speaker's character. For many a protester, some fuzzy notion of "self-expression" regularly over-rode any considerations of what ought to have been the serious business at hand, persuading the public of the undesirability of the war.

Burning American flags, for example, senselessly caused many Americans to doubt that war could be opposed by the patriotic.

FINALLY, MR ADAMS thinks it self-evident that the end of conscription and of military training in the colleges is an unalloyed benefit. The former may be very convenient for the children of the affluent, who by and large have always rejected military careers. But both developments lead to armed forces of a sort entirely new to America: large standing forces composed entirely of professionals without even a leaven of officers educated in the civilian colleges and universities.

It used to be said of the U.S. Forces that only ground troops had mothers, that is, that the government could employ aircraft and ships without regard to public opinion, but not infantry. Since the air and sea arm have always been largely volunteer, this really meant that only draftees have mothers. The end of conscription has meant the end of a powerful check upon the deployment of troops. Adams might argue that this check did not keep 500,000 draftees from going to Viet Nam. It did not, because draft deferments for college students exempted most of the sons of the middle class from military service. As a consequence, the War retained the support of a large majority of the American people far longer than Adams would probably like to admit.

THESE THEN, ARE THE ENDS, some dubious in themselves, others dubious as to causation, that "justify" the politicisation and disruption of the American campus.

Mr Adams may well be right in seeing the British protesters at the University of Sussex as less intelligent than his old colleagues in the U.S.A. Now that the ineffectuality of protest politics has become manifest, it should not be surprising that the remnant that still disrupt should be less competent than those who joined the movement at its peak.

But this discrimination between the two movements does nothing to disguise the essentially undemocratic and authoritarian nature of much of the post-1968 protest movement in the U.S.A. Michael Vannoy Adams may well have grown up and out of this sort of behaviour. He should not now romanticise it.

The End of "Praxis"

WE SHOULD LIKE to inform our readers and subscribers that further publication of the Yugoslav edition of *Praxis* has become impossible. The difficulties with which we have been constantly confronted grew especially in 1974, when the journal was deprived of every financial support. Quite recently the printing house in which the Yugoslav Edition of *Praxis* has been printed since its first issue sent us a written notice saying that

> *"the political activists and the governing body of this OUR (Organisation of Associated Work) have taken the decision that in the future the service of printing the journal* 'Praxis' *should be discontinued."*

Accordingly we have no other choice but to state that *further publication of the Yugoslav Edition of journal* "Praxis" *has been rendered impossible.*

The editorial board of the International Edition of *Praxis* (some of whose members are not from Zagreb) will meet when it becomes possible, and will inform our readers and subscribers of any decisions it may reach concerning the International Edition.

Contributors to *Praxis* are asked not to send any further contributions for either edition of the journal. Subscribers to both editions are asked to send their back subscriptions as soon as possible, but not to send a subscription for 1975.

The administration of *Praxis* under the control of the editorial board will continue to collect back subscriptions and bookshop debts and also to pay the journal's debts. A report about the work of the administration and the editorial board of *Praxis* will be submitted to the next regular Assembly of the Croatian Philosophical Society.

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At this moment, when the Yugoslav Edition of *Praxis* after ten years terminates its existence, the editorial board might be expected to give an analysis and evaluation of the journal's work and experience. However, as there is no chance of such an analysis being published at the present moment, it remains only to leave the judgment of our activity to the future.

Once again we wish to stress that the members of the editorial board of *Praxis* have always held and still continue to hold to the principles of critical and open Marxism and humanistic and self-managing socialism. These principles they clearly proclaimed in the first issue of the journal and consistently defended and tried to develop during the ten years of the journal's publication.

We want to thank you for having been a subscriber and a reader of our journal.

With friendly regards
THE EDITORIAL BOARD
OF THE JOURNAL "PRAXIS"

Zagreb, 24 March, 1975

Writer's Rights

WASN'T IT A SIGHT to see Gillian Tindall ["The Writer's Status", ENCOUNTER, March] dogging it in the manger over the likes of poor old dead Jacqueline Susann while managing to be dead oblivious to the likes of poor old dead David Jones!

Never mind. Through all that Tindall gas and smoke the simple principle of PLR stands unharmed if unacknowledged. The writer's product is his book, whether he writes just one or just hundreds, and he deserves to be paid for its use by the general public.

LORNA TRACY

Newcastle upon Tyne

One Voice, in Harmony

REGARDING the article by Mr Frank Gibney, I met an Irish priest who succeeded in speaking and reading Japanese after studying it for five hours each day for fifteen years.

PATRICK J. N. BURY

Dublin

"Amerenglish" (House & Home Dept.)

YOUR CONTRIBUTOR, Mr Ian Robinson, [ENCOUNTER, January] may be interested in the following quotation from John Buchan's book *Mr Standfast*, first published in 1919:

> "The house—or 'home' as they preferred to name it at Biggleswick—was one of some two hundred others which ringed a pleasant Midland common."

It would seem that the misuse of the word "home" was sufficiently common at that time to be used by the author as one of the characteristics of a group of people whom he rightly expected his readers to regard with some distaste.

T. BRYAN FLEMING

Townend House,
Dalry, Ayrshire

AUTHORS

Bessie Head was born in South Africa in 1937, and now lives in Botswana. She has published three novels; the latest is *A Question of Power* (Heinemann Educational, 1974). . . .

Melvin J. Lasky's article is an expanded and revised version of a reportage originally written for *The New York Times* and printed here with the permission of its Sunday Magazine. . . .

Dan Davin is Director of the Academic Division and Deputy Secretary to the Delegates of Oxford University Press, which is about to publish his book of reminiscences, *Closing Times*. This will include his memoir of Joyce Cary and also a remembrance of Louis MacNeice which appeared in the August 1972 issue. . . .

Jan Morris is a regular contributor to ENCOUNTER; her recent travel articles include "Singapore" (January 1975), "Hong Kong" (July 1974), and "Black Thoughts from the Caribbean" (April 1973). . . .

Robert Conquest is an historian and poet. His books include *The Great Terror* (Macmillan, 1968); he is at present working on a study of world politics. . . .

Samuel Brittan is economic commentator of the *Financial Times*. Among his books are *The Price of Economic Freedom* (1970) and *Capitalism and the Permissive Society* (Macmillan, 1973). "Towards a Corporate State?" was delivered as a Stockton Lecture at the London Business School earlier this year. . . .

Hugh Lloyd-Jones is Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University. His introduction and translation of Semonides' poem on women, which appeared in the May issue of ENCOUNTER, has just been published, with commentaries and illustrations, by Duckworth (London) and Noyes Press (U.S.A.) under the title *Females of the Species*. . . .

Vernon Bogdanor is Fellow in Politics of Brasenose College, Oxford. He is co-author, with Robert Skidelsky, of *The Age of Affluence* (Macmillan, 1970), and his edition of Disraeli's *Lothair* will be published by Oxford University Press later this year. . . .

The Epilogue to **George Feaver's** series of articles on "The American Indians" has unavoidably been held over to the July issue. . . .
The drawings of Robert E. Lee and Ulrike Meinhof are by **Richard Willson.** . . .

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